

# ***Around the Hill***

*Round Hill Presbyterian Church, Elizabeth, PA*

Vol 4 No 1

April 2017



## ***From the Pastor's Pen...***

There are two main items on the agenda for this quarter's Pastor's Pen, one looking mostly to the past, and one looking mostly to the future.

First, I want to express my great gratitude to God and to all of you for the privilege of serving here at Round Hill. Over and over, my family and I have experienced his blessings in this place, from the beautiful sunrises and sunsets on the hill to the amazing love and care that you all lavish upon us. The generous Christmas gift that you once again share with us is but one of many examples, and we are, as mentioned, grateful for it and for you.

Second, I want to report to you on the work of our Vision Team. For about a year or so, the team of Bonnie Craig, Dawn Gagliardi, Jules Simon, Toni Stith, Janice Turek, and yours truly has prayed, studied, and talked together, seeking, according to the charge given us by the Session and the congregation, to discern a vision of what God wants Round Hill Church to be and do in the time and place where we find ourselves. The work has been, at various times, exciting, frustrating, joyous, and challenging. We experienced spiritual and emotional resistance, but also experienced the power of your prayers and of the Holy Spirit. In the end, we believe that we have indeed caught at least a glimpse of God's vision for us. We have shared our findings with the Session, **in the report that is included below**, and they have, as the shepherds and leaders of this congregation, accepted and endorsed it. The Vision Team has been officially dismissed, our phase of the work complete, but that simply means that the next and far more important phase of that work—living into the vision—is beginning.

The Session will be meeting in retreat on March 11 to discuss, among other things, the first practical steps that we need to take, so you will be hearing more on this matter soon. But I want to give you a few highlights, hopefully to whet your appetite as you consider what mighty things God is preparing to accomplish for his kingdom through all of us at Round Hill Church. In brief, we are convinced that our church is well-positioned to become a powerful force for the expansion of the kingdom, but that we need to become more fully aware of our commission, given by Jesus

himself, to be his witnesses. We do many good and faithful things, within our congregation and in the broader community, and it is time now for us to make it more explicitly clear that we do those things because we believe that Jesus Christ is Lord, and that he has died, risen, and ascended for the sake of his people. To use a phrase that came up frequently in the Vision Team's work, we need to add proclamation of God's love in Jesus to our demonstration of that love.

Take a look at the report, remembering that the details and practical steps given there are suggestions that will be more fully fleshed out by the Session and the congregation as we proceed. If you have questions, please feel free to ask me, or any of the team members. And please continue to pray for our church, that we might faithfully follow where the Spirit is leading us.

## **Round Hill Presbyterian Church Vision Team Final Report**

After much study, discussion, and prayer, the Vision Team has come to believe that God is calling Round Hill Presbyterian Church to be:

### ***A church that bears witness to Jesus Christ at every opportunity.***

In pursuit of this vision, we suggest that the Session, Pastor, and leadership of the congregation arrange for the following steps to be taken:

- 1) **Remind the congregation of the Great Commission.** Jesus's final words to the disciples in Matthew 28:18-20 are the fundamental and defining mission statement for the entire Church: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Accordingly, everything that we do as a church should be consonant with this mission.

It is the responsibility of every member of the church to ask “How am I working toward becoming a better disciple of Jesus, and how am I helping others do so?” By the same token, it is the responsibility of every ministry and activity of the church to seek ways of encouraging discipleship within the context of their work.

2) **Make and grow some disciples.**

- a. The Vision Team recommends that the Session prepare and deliver training to the congregation in the ways in which every Christian is called to bear witness to Jesus. We note that one useful resource for such training is the book *Got Style?*, by Jeffrey A. Johnson (2009, Judson Press).
- b. Following training, the existing ministries and activities of the church should be updated to offer structured opportunities for members to gain experience in witnessing. For example, the clothes closet and/or food pantry ministries could be expanded by the addition of a prayer room, staffed by members of the congregation willing to talk, pray, and otherwise connect with clients from the community. Other ministries that could “host” witness opportunities include the Thriving Survivors, VBS, Sunday worship (especially at Christmas and Easter when many barely-churched people are present), Recharge, and members’ own family gatherings.

3) **Expand the witness.** These future steps are more hypothetical, and the details would need to develop organically as the congregation achieves a critical mass of members trained and excited about witnessing. Broadly speaking, the Vision Team can see great potential in:

- a. Launching new ministries with a specific agenda for witness. These could include such things as an outreach to people struggling with addiction, new engagement in the schools or senior living facilities, neighborhood outreach, and more.

- b. Building resources for accountability and growth among the witnesses. These could include new small groups, covenant partnerships, etc.
- c. Restructuring our Christian Education ministry to further stimulate the process of training and growth in discipleship for all ages.

The Vision Team is grateful for the opportunity given by the Session to engage in this work; for the support of our prayer partners and the congregation; for the support and encouragement of Bob Stauffer, Rich Wolling, and the Presbytery of the Alleghenies; and for the mercy, grace, and inspiration of our Lord God throughout the process. May he be glorified in what we have done.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Vision Team

Bonnie Craig  
Julius Simon  
Toni Stith

Dawn Gagliardi  
Matt Stith  
Janice Turek

**CALVARY’S CROSS**

*There’s a cross that stands on Calvary,  
Where Jesus Christ was killed,  
And the crowd all jeered and mocked Him  
As round His feet they milled.*

*Laughing, shouting, and gambling  
For the purple cloak, He wore,  
Saying, “We should use it—  
He won’t need it anymore!”*

*The shame of all this history  
Still haunts us to this day,  
Our Lord died so victoriously  
And bore our sins away.*

*Little did they realize,  
That night at Calvary,  
He was Lord, and gave Salvation,  
And thus, He set us free!*

*Taken from **Beside Still Waters**  
A Collection of Poems by  
Marilyn Bowen~  
Permission Granted by Glen Bowen*

## SESSION NOTES:

During November through February the Session conducted its usual business highlighted by the following:

- \* Approved the 2017 budget
- \* Received the report of the Vision Team and will begin the explore ways to implement the vision it lays out.
- \* Made the following areas of responsibilities for the elders, **Fellowship:** Bill Leggett and Jaclyn Sorrentino, **Instruction:** Jesse Sandor, **Outreach:** Eileen Russell, Pat Conley, **Personnel:** Don Wilhelm, Janice Turek, **Worship:** Gayle Larcinese, Bob Schwille.
- \* Received David and Shara Zoeller into the membership of Round Hill.
- \* Approved the baptisms of Melody Anne Coleman and Thea Grace Zoeller.
- \* Outreach under the leadership of Lisa Wagner collected over sixty shoeboxes to send to Samaritan's Purse Christmas Child.
- \* Instruction has Gayle Larcinese and Jackie Karnes leading this year's Vacation Bible School and the theme and dates are set. The theme is "Run for Fun" the week of July 17 to 21.
- \* Fellowship held the Christmas luncheon in Dec. And the "Show Your Love" lunch in Feb. With other events to be planned for 2017.
- \* Worship planned and carried out the Christmas services and are in the process of planning the Easter services. Watch for details in the bulletin and on the website.
- \* Personnel conducted the annual review with the pastor and continues their reviews with the staff.

Please continue to pray for the Elders, Deacons, and Trustees and Pastor Stith, as they lead Round Hill. Please feel free to talk to any elder about any questions or concern you may have. Your feedback is an important line of communication. The Elders may not be able to meet every concern of every person, but they do need to know what they are. ~Bob Leggett

## Our Deepest Sympathies:

To Glenn Bowen on the passing of his wife, Molly Bowen.

To Faye and Alyssa Hobough and Family on the passing of Jim.

To Linda and Paul Miller on the passing of her brother Christopher.

To Jackie and Phil Sorrentino on the passing of Phil's brother.

## REACH MISSION TRIP

We are headed to **Columbia County, NY** the week of **July 23 to 29**. Anyone who has finished sixth grade at the end of this school term or older through adults is able to come with us. It will be a week of serving, learning, worship, and fun fellowship. We will be working on the homes of folks who need a hand repairing and building. We will build wheelchair ramps and porches, paint houses inside and out, repair damaged floors and walls, and many other projects. We will learn and worship and build new relationships. You need to register as soon as possible.

If you are interested call Bob Leggett (412) 384-4175 or email [bobleg2@comcast.net](mailto:bobleg2@comcast.net) to register or with questions.

**Come be part of something bigger than yourself!**



## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Come run the happiest most exciting race ever at this year's fun-filled Vacation Bible School - FUN RUN

July 17 - 21 from 9:00 - 12:00.

Our race starts at 2 Timothy 4:7-8

"I have fought the good fight.

I have finished the race.

I have kept the faith.

Now there is a crown waiting for me.

It is given to those who are right with God".

We will follow the race route on a scripture-packed course through Bible Studies, Worship & Drama, Crafts, Games and more.

For a successful VBS many volunteers are needed. These are the areas we need help staffing: Registration Team - Decorating Team - Tech Team - Bible Study Leaders - Preschool Director - Craft Team - Game Leader - Snack Team - Music Leader - Drama Team - An entire congregation in prayer.

We are excited to gets plans underway so please contact us and let us know where you would like to help!

## Country Fair

Mark your Calendars: The Country Fair is Saturday, October 7, 2017. Please mark your calendars and make plans to join us in preparing for and hosting this fund-raising event.

### **Show the Love Lunch**

Members of the congregation were invited to lunch at Eagles Landing after the 10:30 am service, February 12, 2017. It was a time for fellowship and approximately 24 people attended. A good time was had by all. We are looking forward to having the next after-church lunch in the spring. Any suggestions for other activities, please let Bill Leggett or Jackie Sorrentino know. ~Bill Leggett

### **Recently Baptized**

Melody Anne Coleman

Alyssa Hobaugh & Richard Coleman-Parents

Thea Grace Zoeller

Shara & David Zoeller

### **New Life Options-Baby Bottle Campaign**

The outreach ministry of Round Hill supports New Life Options on an ongoing basis. We at Round Hill are pleased to report we raised over \$500 at this point with the baby bottle campaign. The ministry helps moms who need assistance monetarily, emotionally, educationally, and spiritually. The money goes to purchasing staple items such as diapers, wipes, shampoo, motioned. Thank you for your generous support. We are a nonprofit ministry and are strictly supported by public donations.

If you have not returned your baby bottles of yet it is not too late. Place your bottles in the wicker basket in the narthex. If you would like to know more about the ministry, visit us at Chess St. in Monongahela or notify Eileen Russell at [412-352-9228](tel:412-352-9228). God Bless you all.  
~Eileen Russel