

NATIONAL X PRESS

THE NATIONAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

MAY/JUNE 2010 | VOL. 3

SUNDAY SERMONS

Worship at 8, 9:15, and 11 a.m.

Paul's Letter to the Romans

May 16

The Storm before the Rain

Rev. Earl Palmer

May 23

Total Help for Total Need

Rev. Eunice McGarrahan

May 30

Grace Can Run Faster

Rev. Earl Palmer

June 6

The Two Faces of Freedom

Rev. Earl Palmer

June 13

The World Watches on Tip-Toes

Rev. Earl Palmer

June 20

The Good Surprise of an Old Promise

Rev. Earl Palmer

June 27

The Day is Coming

Rev. Earl Palmer

For a complete schedule of worship services, please check our web site, www.NationalPres.org.

Guest Preachers Come to NPC this Summer

July and August Bring More Great Preaching to National

This summer, we're blessed to have some great friends who happen to be inspiring preachers in our pulpit this summer. Dr. John Huffman and Dr. Cleophus LaRue will be with us in July and August, with our treasured associate pastors, Dr. Douglas Learned and Rev. Eunice McGarrahan in early July and late August.

Huffman: Author and Preacher



Recently, Dr. Huffman has been involved in the planning and pastoral leadership of the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization held in Cape Town, South Af-

rica this fall.

A prolific writer, Dr. Huffman has writ-

ten nine books, including *The Family You Want* and *Forgive Us Our Prayers*. He has had radio and television talk shows on secular stations in Miami, Pittsburgh, and Los Angeles that discuss contemporary matters of faith and life.

Dr. Huffman will preach at NPC on July 18 and 25, and on August 1.

LaRue: Teacher and Preacher



A long-time friend of NPC, Dr. Cleophus LaRue, is the Francis Landey Patton Professor of Preaching at Princeton Theological Seminary. Ordained in the National Baptist

Convention of America, Dr. LaRue has

Continued on page 5

The Message Café for Summer 2010

Classes for All Ages Focus on the Beatitudes

By Rev. Eunice McGarrahan

Where are we headed in our walk of faith? Do we know where we're going and how to get there? In fact, what does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus? At NPC we talk about the Pathway of Discipleship. We believe that following Jesus takes a lifetime of discovery to understand what it means to worship regularly, grow intentionally in our faith, and serve generously.

This summer you're invited to further discovery by participating in our Message Café on Sunday mornings in Stone Hall. We will focus on the pathway of discipleship by looking at the Beatitudes, a part of Jesus' teaching that is all about getting things straight in your life with Christ. Each of the Beatitudes begins with the

phrase, "Blessed are those..." but you may wonder how you are blessed by being poor in spirit or in mourning? A more helpful way to interpret "Blessed are those..." is "You are on the right road if..." In other words, you are on the right path to discipleship if your life is as the Beatitudes describe.

Join us this summer to look at Jesus' teaching about discipleship in our series: "On the Right Road: A Disciple's Look at the Beatitudes." Coffee and a continental breakfast will be available at 9:15 a.m. in Stone Hall. Our children and youth will be studying the same topic in their Road Trip series. We invite you to be a part of the congregation-wide conversation on discipleship.

NATIONAL X PRESS

a bimonthly publication by and about the people of NPC in ministry

DEADLINES

July/August: June 1

September/October: August 1

November/December: October 1

January/February: December 1

March/April: February 1

May/June: April 1

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NPS Celebrates 40 Years of Quality Education and Love

By Woody Cunningham

In June 1969, the first edition of NPC's newspaper, *The Church Tower* proudly proclaimed, "There is a new sign on the grounds of the new church. It says National Presbyterian School."

Even before the construction of the church was complete and the renovation of the school building was finished, registration began for the 1969-1970 school year. Planning for the school began in 1961-1962 under the leadership of Dr. Edward Elson, the Senior Pastor. The school was envisioned as an integral part of the church's mission to the surrounding community; it would serve children from all segments of the Washington community without regard to religious or racial background.

NPC's Session and members can be justly proud of the growth of the small school, which began struggling to make payroll, to the outstanding school it is today. Throughout this 40-year period of growth, much has changed, but there has been one constant—the drive for excellence. The school has continued to be a mission of the church with prayers and services in our chapel and sanctuary; however, members of other faiths send their children to NPS because of its deserved reputation for excellence in education and a solid moral grounding.

Anecdotes abound about the early years of the school, ranging from the necessity to change the name of Lawrence the rabbit to Lawrencita after the bunny had a litter of bunnies to the appearance one Easter week by Associate Pastor Tom Stone in a bunny suit.

Being in the center of diplomatic activity in the U.S., the school naturally attracted a number of families from the international community. One of these children was the daughter of a Swedish diplomat, who later returned as Ambassador. The little girl spoke no English, but the other children warmly accepted her and within two weeks she spoke her first

English "More juice, please."

The children were also exposed to events of national importance, like the funerals of John Foster Dulles and J. Edgar Hoover. Of course, the children did not attend the funerals,



but the motorcycle police and FBI agents were in evidence around the school and the children were curious about their comings and goings.

The standards for the new school were set very high right from the beginning. In her first annual report to parents, the Session, and church members, my wife Pat Cunningham, the first Head of the school, said:

"Many of you have asked what our objectives are and what kinds of experiences we are offering here at National Presbyterian School; therefore, I have attempted to outline some of the things we do and why. The goal of the school is to help each child reach his/her full potential in an atmosphere of security, acceptance, and success. To accomplish this goal, the school has: (1) a success-oriented educational philosophy which emphasizes a pleasant and enjoyable experience for the child; (2) an environment which encourages and promotes learning; (3) effective teachers and; (4) the interest and participation of parents. At National Presbyterian our educational objectives include helping the children to develop a positive self-image; their intellectual ability; an interest and joy in learning; language skills; promotion of social development; and encouragement of self-expression."



Pat Cunningham (below) sits with pre-Kindergartners during the school's early years; sixth graders (left) celebrate a more recent graduation class; and children (above) from the 1990s smile for the camera.



The standards remain high today and the core values, though expressed in different words are much the same as the school continues to seek excellence. The school is fortunate to have Jim Neill as its Head.

In a recent report Jim explained, "NPS is a school committed to safeguarding the precious childhood years for its students of today and tomorrow and to being a warm and nurturing place for children to grow, learn, and thrive." Under Jim's direction, the school has reaffirmed its mission:

"Founded in 1969 as an educational mission of the National Presbyterian Church, National Presbyterian School is a traditional co-educational elementary school dedicated to educational excellence in an ecumenical Christian environment. A loving and inclusive community, National Presbyterian School strives to help children develop intellectual, spiritual, and personal foundations that will serve them throughout their lives.

Music Speaks All Languages—from Scotland to Thailand

by Paula Glendinning

I had the privilege of visiting Chiang Mai in northern Thailand in February as part of an unofficial tag team of visitors from NPC. Doug Learned visited just before I did, and Claude Bennett overlapped our trips, helping to introduce us to his friends there. Earl Palmer has just returned from Chiang Mai, and I'm sure we all experienced such gracious hospitality that we have each brought home important memories of the people there.

I've been a member of National for 34 years, and I've been playing the bagpipes for 42 years. Sometimes those two things lead me in different directions, but I'm happy when they fit together. It's always in Christ where everything fits together perfectly.

For several years I had been hearing about the relationship between NPC and McGilvary Seminary, and a warm fellowship with the congregation at the First Church of Chiang Mai, but I never thought that I would be able to be a part of the ministry. This winter, as I was planning a trip to Bangkok with my mom to visit my brother and sister-in-law and their new baby, I asked Claude Bennett if there was anything I could do to help in Chiang Mai. Claude's immediate idea was for me to bring my bagpipes to add a musical dimension to our partnership. I was surprised, but very willing!

Claude is an expert at e-mail and sent messages to several friends in Chiang Mai, and the trip began to fall into place after a few more surprising twists. Jack Neale, who is the head of the English Department at the Prince Royal's College (founded in 1887 by graduates of the College of Wooster in Ohio) responded quickly with suggestions for me to lead the PRC Baccalaureate Procession and hold a bagpipe concert in the school's new auditorium.

The Baccalaureate Service was inspiring, as the students showed grace



Jack Neale, Prince Royal's College, with piper Paula Glendinning

and enthusiasm, especially when they sang hymns with great energy. I loved speaking to the English classes over the next few days and answering their questions about the bagpipes.

At the end of that week, the concert was a thrill, as I was given the chance to introduce the music I love to a new audience and perform with some talented musicians. Jack and I worked together by e-mail to create the program, and we included the PRC band and orchestra, singers from several churches in the area, and even some local bagpipers, who are now my good friends.

While in Chiang Mai, I was honored to be invited to perform the offertory at The First Church (founded by Daniel McGilvary from Princeton Seminary in 1868). One of the young men in the congregation told me after the service that he thought the pipe music sounded like worshipping in heaven. His eloquence in English about a kind of music he had never heard before was heart-warming.

Claude and I were asked to help lead a chapel service at McGilvary College of Divinity at Payap University. It was interesting to travel around the world to get to know Claude better and understand more about his vision of ministry in Thailand and Burma. I was very happy to

introduce the seminarians to the song that my husband, Charlie, wrote in memory of our first grandson. I told them about "Stuart's Carol" and how it has become a part of the Christmas Eve pageant at NPC.

The music spoke to them in ways that I never could, especially with my very poor skills speaking Thai. Two new friends, Garrett and Candice Intorn, accompanied me on guitar and piano. They are members of the Karen tribe, and they have a ministry that is desperately important to the Karen people in refugee camps on the Thai-Burmese border. Garrett and Candice are raising the funds to build a church where the Karen Christians can worship. They gave me a beautiful photograph of 1,500 people worshipping outdoors by candlelight at a Christmas Eve service.

As we each respond individually to causes that touch our hearts, I'd be glad to talk with anyone interested in our mission partners in Thailand. If your heart is open for a new idea, I'm sure Claude Bennett will be able to help us make whatever connections need to be made—he certainly made those connections for me!

Summer at NPC

Continued from page 1

been pastor of churches in Texas and served as interim pastor of churches in Harlem and Queens in New York City. Long considered an expert on the history and practice of African American preaching, Dr. LaRue is the author of *The Heart of Black Preaching*.

Dr. LaRue will be in NPC's pulpit on August 8 and 15.

NPC's Own

NPC's Associate Pastor for Christian Formation and Discipleship, Rev. Eunice McGarrahan will preach on July 4, August 22, and 29. Executive Pastor Dr. Douglas Learned will preach on July 11. Join us this summer for worship.

Memorial Day Memories — at National

by Eleanor Heginbotham, NPC Elder

The parent congregations of NPC reckoned with every war in America's history. Newspapers and church records document the varying stance of each pastor with each succeeding challenge to Christian soldiers moving "as to war" – and then to peace. Here is a sampling of the thick record of the members and clergy—the meetings and services and sacrifices of our church—and one might even say the origins of "The Cold War."

It began, of course, from the end of World War II, in which many members, including the son of the Senior Pastor, Dr. Albert J. McCartney, lost lives. Both Dr. McCartney and his successor, Dr. Edward L. R. Elson, served as Chaplains. As what would be called, "The Cold War" replaced newfound peace, many of those involved in solving its problems were also important in the life of the newly named church on Connecticut Avenue.

President Truman, a Baptist who sometimes attended our church, spoke at that dedication from "Covenant First" to "National" Presbyterian Church. One of thousands of *Washington Post* stories that mentioned the church featured the headline, "Truman Urges 'Decent Peace' Mobilization of Christians," in October 1947. Truman was quoted, saying "There never was a time in the history of the country when we more needed the backing of those people who believe in the Golden Rule and who believe in the teachings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

Later President Eisenhower, whom Dr. Elson would baptize and who became a faithful member of the church, led in that spirit. He also laid the cornerstone of the current sanctuary. Both presidents corresponded in handwritten notes with the pastor, as did the many post-war workers who filled the church, among them members of the cabinet. For example, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was not only a member; he was the son of a Presbyterian minister and the grandson of an elder at Covenant-First Church.

Among the other new postwar members were many from the "old" Europe, who came to the United States seeking new lives. One young family was the Bako family from Hungary who were treasured NPC members always (Ilona has been a Deacon). She has presented her late husband's memoir, for which she posthumously received The Silver Prize of the Academy of Arts and Sciences, to the William Culbertson Memorial Library, where many other memories of past wars, efforts of peace, and rich church history reside. We want to share such stories in these pages too; send yours: to Heginbotham@csp.edu.

Farewell to Earl Palmer

On June 27, we bid a fond farewell to Earl Palmer, who has been at NPC for nearly two years as Preaching Pastor-in-Residence. Earl came to National after retiring from Seattle's University Presbyterian



Church. An accomplished author and teacher, Earl led and inspired us from the pulpit on Sunday mornings, as well as from the lectern at our Wednesday teaching series. His warm heart and giving spirit have been a kindness to us all. We wish Earl and Shirley much happiness with their children and grandchildren on the West Coast, and are thankful for his time with us.

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