



CHRONICLES

of Reems Creek-Beech Presbyterian Church

JANUARY 2012

The Pastor's Part

Gloom, despair and agony on me. Remember that old song from Hee Haw? That is what the computers, here after known as WOD – works of the devil, are bringing me. The office computer and the one at home - Internet problems galore. I wish I could just turn them off and walk away but they are a large part of my work and my life. A good case can be made that WODs are indispensable now. So much information comes from the Internet and more and more contacts are made by this impersonal, yet necessary, tool. And, a tool it is, but often it seems that we serve *it* instead of *it* serving us. Perhaps that is where we go wrong often in our faith. We demand that God serve us, that he meet our expectations, instead of our surrendering to him. I only have to put up with two computers. God has to put up with an entire world of us, self-willed, self-centered, self-indulgent creatures that he loves. And there is the struggle for him and our only hope. He cannot just walk away because we are loved. He cannot just pull the plug on the world and give up. We mean too much to him. What we must do is strive as best we can to stay connected to him so that we function properly; that we are online all the time with our heavenly Father. If we can do this, then, whatever happens in life can be more easily handled and more successfully overcome.

Peace,
Preecha

Third Sunday Celebration

Want to see results of the Third Sunday Celebration Offering? Look outside the front doors of the church and see repaired, safer steps. **Look in the fellowship hall and kitchen, and see the new floor!**

How many times have you walked through or around the church and wished we had the money to repair, change, or make better, various aspects of our church building and grounds? And, most of the time, we want those wishes to be fulfilled quickly, we want those prayers answered now. We have learned through scripture and experience that answers and progress sometimes come slowly. But, with continued dedication and giving spirits, with thoughtfulness and planning, we are beginning to see some of those wishes fulfilled.

The Third Sunday Celebration Offering is collected the third Sunday of each month at the beginning of Worship and will be used for building and repair projects that exceed the building maintenance budget. The next project for funds from the Third Sunday Celebration Offering will be refinishing and recovering the pews in the sanctuary and future projects include a new roof over the fellowship hall and connecting roof. Our Property Team is in charge of assessing and prioritizing further building projects.

EXCITED TO SHARE GOD'S LOVE

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Mission Report

Mission outreach that our church provides every year for local, national, and worldwide relief is impressive for such a small congregation.

The Mission Team focused on seven programs this past year seeking congregational support through monetary and volunteer time donations. A review of our efforts and results from 2011 shows a decline in giving for most of those programs.

Black Mountain Home for Children provides a safe home for children and young adults who would otherwise do not have one. Ten volunteers from our church volunteered for the annual Work-Worship-Play Day last April. We collected an offering of \$967 and donated \$500 from the church budgeted benevolence fund. The offering designation was new this year, budgeted benevolence remained the same from previous years and the volunteer time donation was down 55%.

Habitat for Humanity builds low interest homes for people who qualify locally. Our volunteer support, 11 people, remained the same from 2010 but with a few volunteers working multiple days. Our offering of about \$700 was 30% less than the previous year and the budgeted benevolence, \$600, remained the same.

Our church supports the work of 2 mission efforts, the Whites in Brazil and Becca Young in Indonesia. Designated benevolence remained the same this year.

Our Nickel-a-Meal offerings to alleviate hunger and poverty locally and world-wide were down 4% this past year. Total donations were \$1,418.36.

NBSM received donations through several programs this year. Souper Bowl Offering was \$644, up 104% from the previous year. Collection of items for Souper Bowl was down 41% and monetary donations were down 56%. We donated to the OUTHouse project for the first time this year in the amount of \$600. Designated benevolence remained the same at \$500.

Operation Christmas Child project collected 54 shoeboxes, a decrease of 16% and the number of volunteers travelling to Boone fell from 19 to 13, a 32% decrease.

Our annual Pig Picking fundraiser remained the same with a \$1000 donation for the Weaverville Senior Meal Site.

The Mission Team is encouraged by the effort that members of this congregation put forth in providing basic needs for those less fortunate. We will use information from this past year's assessment as we put together plans for 2012 on how to best serve our communities and whether we need to change or redirect our efforts. We continue to thank God for his hand in providing for all through the love and support of his people. And, we thank you, our congregation, for the trust and support of all of our missions.



Congregational Covered Dish Lunch

Please stay for lunch after worship on **February 12**. We will have our first covered dish meal for 2012, enjoy the food and fellowship, honor our new members, and try out the new flooring in the fellowship hall.

Easter Egg Fun



March 25 at 6:00 p.m.

A family night supper, sponsored by the Christian Education Team and Youth Group, is in the planning stage. An Easter Egg Hunt for the children is planned with glow-in-the-dark eggs. You can participate or just watch the fun. Further details later, but put this one on your calendar and plan to attend!



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Grace Cook Holcombe

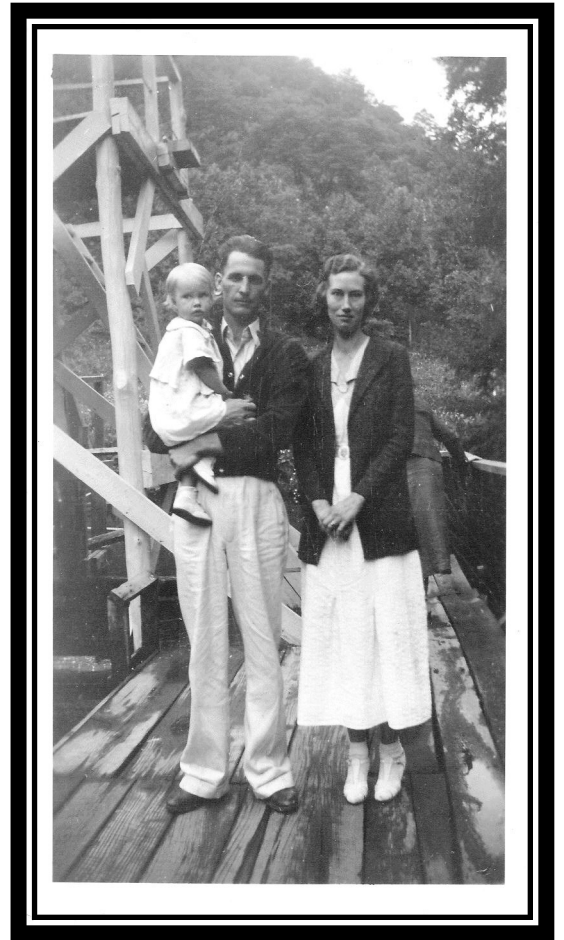
We lost a window into a slice of Beech history when we lost Grace Holcombe, and we lost a gentle spirit, overflowing with love and willingness to serve her Lord and family. She died January 14, 2012 at the age of 98.

“My daddy, Harley L. Cook and my mother Bonnie F. Ray Cook were married January 4, 1911, and they lived here and there until I was old enough to know the where-about. They had eight children...”

At 80 Grace wrote the history of her life, for her daughter Clara, grandchildren Michelle and Mark, and possibly for herself, so she could recount and assess her accomplishments. She wrote that she was still able to live by herself, mow her grass, and rake her leaves. Tending flowers was also a given wherever Grace lived, from the one room cabin on Blackberry Inn Road where she and husband K lived when first married, to her last home in Oakley next to grandson, Mark. And, tending those flowers on her hands and knees, even at 80! Once, a car stopped and the driver asked if Grace needed help when he saw her on her knees in the grass. “No,” she said, “just cutting dandelions out of the grass with a knife.” And Mark came home to find a red-face exhausted Grace, yards from her walker as she had inched her way along the walk, weeding her flowers. Why, she could have just crawled back to her walker when finished, she had remarked.

Grace’s acceptance of hard work, sacrifice, and service was the theme of Grace’s life. But to Grace, it was just the way things were, the way you should live. The second of eight children, she helped care for her siblings. She walked two miles from the family home on Blackberry Inn Road to the school that sat at the beginning of Maney Branch Road. Hardly ever missed a day, and she and sister Kate would ‘plow’ through snow in front of their younger sister Justine to make a path to the school on snowy days. The family later moved to the end of Reems Creek so the children could be closer to school.

Grace remembered attending church both at Brown’s Chapel and Beech Presbyterian Church, whichever was closest to home at the time. She remembered the first Beech church, a wooden frame building that sat closer to and faced Reems Creek. She told me how the large front porch served as a staging area after church on Sunday mornings for boys interested in courting the girls. She said, “The boys would line up on each side of the door and the girls would come out and they would ask could I take you home?” Granddaughter Michele, hearing this story, asked Grace if the boys asked her, to which Grace quickly replied, “Law, yes.”



Grace and K with daughter, Clara on the dock at Camp Sequoyah



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Grace married “one of those boys at Beech”, Kelsey Holcombe, known as K, in 1933, and set up housekeeping near the Craggy Orchard where K worked as superintendent. Grace took care of family and neighbors then, too. K’s mother moved in with them about six months after they were married and she helped care for K’s brothers. One neighbor, who attended Grace’s funeral, told Clara that she and her siblings might have starved if Grace had not fed their family during those Depression years. Grace also cared for the owners of the orchard, Mr. and Mrs. Haywood, for the next 41 years, even flying to Delray Beach, Florida one Thanksgiving when they needed her. She and K moved to Oakley in 1972 and she cared for the Haywoods and her husband until their deaths.

Family members remember Grace’s ability to shoot her husband’s gun and she did so when the need arose. There were plenty of rattlesnakes and copperheads around the orchard and when folks heard Kelsey’s gun go off up the road they wondered if Grace had shot another rattler. Age didn’t slow Grace’s adventuresome spirit, either. She went sledding with grandson, Mark, one winter, starting up near Blackberry Inn, but instead of turning after a short run, as Mark had promised, they kept going and crashed into a ditch trying to avoid the postman. After the crash Grace stood up with broken glasses and a black eye. K’s only remark was, “Well, Grace, you should have known better.”

All who knew Grace remembered her cooking, too. The list of favorites include lemon pound cake, ham biscuits on Christmas Day, fried chicken, apple jelly and bread and butter pickles, sauerkraut, pickled beans, and “best fried rabbit I’ve ever eaten,” said brother Edwin Cook. Grace passed on her secrets of fried chicken, jelly and pickles to Chris Winslow telling him that his chicken was even better than hers. Bob Nesbitt said on community camping trips that many of the ‘old timers’ of Beech remember, Grace would make coffee so strong you could stick a finger in it and leave a hole.

Grace passed on her mission of caring for others and keeping family close. Grace, daughter Clara, and granddaughter, Michelle have been described as three peas in a pod, an example of a close-knit family, surrounded by the leaves of love, caring, and hospitality. Her spirit is still here.

Elizabeth Barbee

