



The Lighthouse

June 2021

130 Years of Missions

When the Biloxi Presbyterian Church was organized in May of 1891, there were only 15 members. Growth was slowly occurring, as the minutes of the Session reflect, as new people trickled into the membership of the church. For a few years, the church owed its solvency to the generosity of the Synodical and Presbyterial Home Missionary Board. The money coming from this fund helped pay the pastor for a few years.

It was not long, however, until the church went from being a mission to doing missions. By 1895, there was an effort to reach out to the “destitute” (in the words of the session minutes) in town. A couple of schools for the children of workers at the canning factories were run on Sunday afternoons. Several women of the congregation were tireless in their efforts at teaching the children – Mrs. W.F. Swan, Miss Nellie Sterne, Miss Belle Gordon, Mrs. E.H. Howe and Mrs. Griffin. From this effort a night school was begun to continue giving these children an education. On Friday nights, the pastor preached to these cannery workers and their families in one of the school houses in Biloxi.

The work of missions moved early beyond the borders of Biloxi and Mississippi to a work in Kentucky and beyond. Mr. A.B. Parmalee and Mrs. C.M. Parmalee were supported in their mission work in Kentucky. Others from the congregation traveled to Kentucky to serve as well. The yearly financial reports from those early years tell us that there was yearly giving to foreign missions, national missions sponsored by the denomination, local missions, and missions across the racial lines of the times. A Ladies Missionary Society was organized in 1912 which further promoted and supported missions in the church. The following year, giving to foreign missions had quadrupled! 1913 also saw the formation of a Junior Missionary Society for the girls in the church and a Home Missions Day on October 26.

During World War II, many pastors were in the military, so our church was led by a retired missionary for 5 years (1942-1947). Reverend Lachlan C. Vass II had been a missionary in the Belgian Congo for 11 years until malaria had taken its toll on his health. Their missions work was far in the interior of Africa and had its own steamboats which Reverend Vass oversaw. On returning from the Congo, he continued to promote the work. His son, Lachlan Vass III also became a missionary in the Belgian Congo and our church continued to support him after the war. One interesting side note is that Rev. Vass's father, Lachlan Vass, Sr., was a chaplain in Stonewall Jackson's brigade during the Civil War and his diary has been published.

The interest in missions grew through the decades. The reason (as I understand it) First Presbyterian Church does not have a steeple is that the church decided to spend the money it was saving to add a steeple on supporting missions instead. If you go up in the south attic of the church you will see the superstructure for the planned steeple that was put there in anticipation of adding one at some point. The south wall of the church is reinforced to support a steeple as well. This decision probably saved the church from damage during Katrina. With a reinforced wall against the battering of the ocean, and no steeple to fall on and crush the roof; the church building was undoubtedly spared.

Our support for missions continues. I believe when a church loses interest in seeing the nations come to Christ, that church is very unhealthy (if not dead). May the Lord give us increase so we can continue to proclaim and promote the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to people across the street and across the world.

Grace & Peace,

Tim



GRACE CHANGES EVERYTHING

Dear Family & Friends,

It is with great joy and sadness that Kelly and I want to let you all know that the Richter family will be moving to Nashville, TN, this summer. I have accepted a new job as the lead pastor of City Church East Nashville (www.citychurcheast.org) starting in August.

We are incredibly sad to leave Somerville and Boston. We love the city and all the amazing friends the Lord

has blessed us with here over the past almost ten years. It has truly been one of the great honors of my life to have been called to plant and then serve as the lead pastor of Seven Hills Church. This City and our church family have made an incredible impact on our hearts and lives and we are so deeply grateful to all of you for your faithful prayers and support that have made our time here in Somerville possible.

We are excited for this new opportunity and very hopeful for this next chapter in our lives and ministry. Please pray for the Lord's rich blessing and provision for a smooth transition for our family, for Seven Hills Church, and for City Church East Nashville.

If you would like to read our good bye letter to the congregation you can find it here:

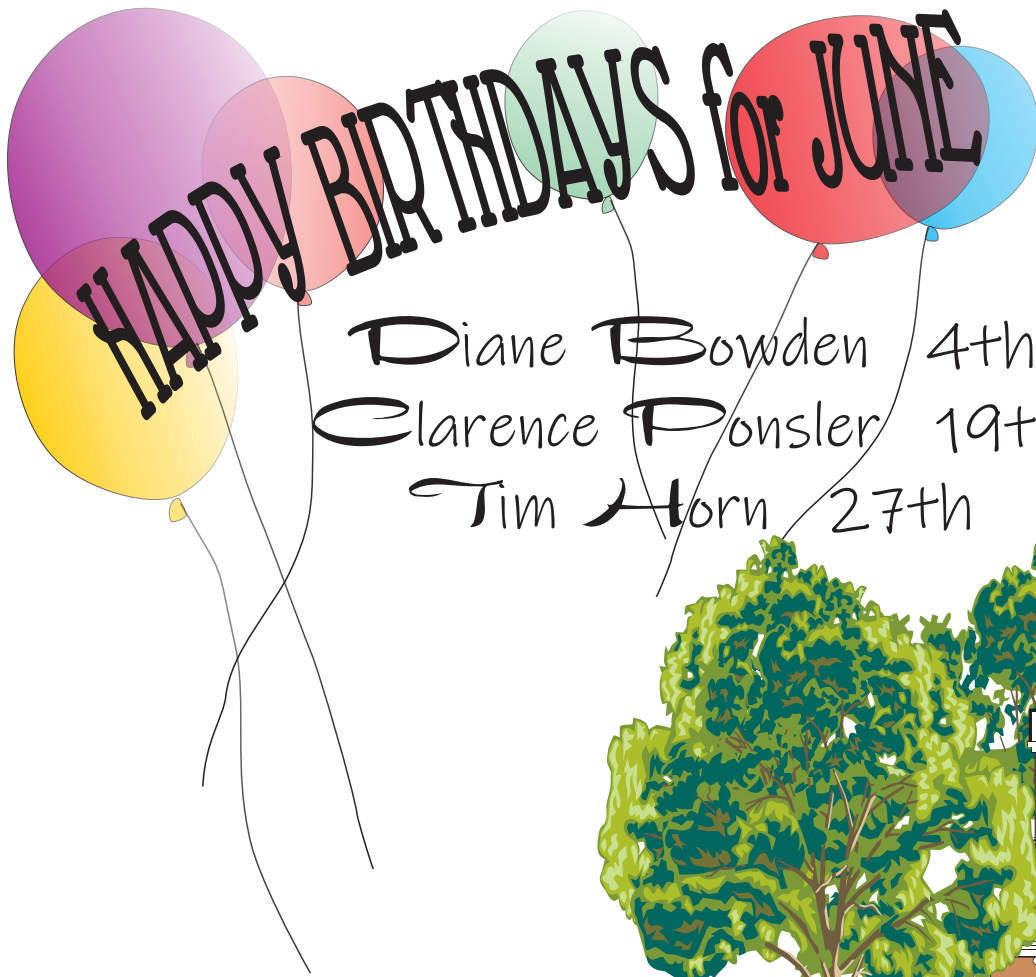
<https://david-richter-gwe9.squarespace.com/config/pages>

With Much Love,
David & Kelly Richter

P.S. Over the course of the next couple of months, our MNA support account will be closing down and all remaining funds will be transferred to Seven Hills Church for use in their continued ministry. If you would like to continue to support Seven Hills Church, please contact MNA and they can help you make plans to transfer your giving to the church's new account.



In May of 2012, David and Kelly Richter were called by Christ the King Boston's Church Planting Network to plant a new church in Somerville, MA (located right in the heart of metro Boston). After much prayer, the Richter's accepted this call and launched The Somerville Project to help raise the necessary funds to make this vision a reality. Thank you so much for your interest in the Richter's life and ministry.



Diane Bowden 4th
Clarence Ponsler 19th
Tim Horn 27th



Happy Birthday
First Pres Biloxi
130 years old

Dates to Remember for June

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| June 5 | Men's Breakfast at 8:00am
in the Fellowship Hall |
| June 6 | Communion |
| June 9 | Ladies Summer Bible Study begins at
6:30 pm |
| June 13 | Monthly Luncheon after the Worship
Service ,please bring a dish to share |
| June 20 | Father's Day |