



Mulberry Presbyterian Church
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*Gospel Music
Sunday:*

August 29th

Do you have an old time favorite hymn you would like us to sing? Is there a special story about your hymn that you would like to share? Be sure to let Sharon Whitley know by August 15th so we can include it on Gospel Music Sunday!

Or Current Resident

*Mulberry Presbyterian Church
5600 Tuckaseegee Road
Charlotte, NC 28208*

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Mulberry Messenger

August 2010

A Year of Discernment: What Is God's Vision for Mulberry? By Rev. Chris Carrasco

This year our focus as a church is on discernment. **What is it that God wants Mulberry to be and do?** Discernment is the process of discovering God's will in a particular situation. What is God's will for your life? What is God's will regarding this church? How can we know it? What if we disagree about what we believe God's will to be? These are all questions and issues we will wrestle with this year.

In order to ask questions, share thoughts, and seek God's will together, we need to gather together as a community of faith. We will be doing this every Sunday morning in the Stokes Fellowship Hall from 10:00-10:45 a.m. We will discuss why we need to be in this process to begin with. We will learn about the underlying principles on how to do evangelism more effectively. We will have time to share hopes and dreams and fears about our future together. We will discuss important aspects on how we can realign our priorities and programs to best fit what we determine God's will to be. This is probably one of the most important questions and processes we have faced in a long time. **We need everybody's input and help as we move forward together into the exciting future God has planned for us.**

As we meet and share and discuss, we will be challenged to NOT ask "What do I want? What do I like best? What makes me the most comfortable?" Instead, we will be challenged to focus on "How can we be more faithful in making disciples? How can we best love God and our neighbor? How can we fulfill the vision and future God has for us?" That is not an easy shift, but it is a necessary one.

This discernment process is an open one. It is a prayerful one. It will lead Mulberry to a new beginning. We will have to prioritize, evaluate, and discern what we are currently doing and readjust to be more in line with what we believe God wants for us. Please know, there is no predetermined outcome. Just an openness to God's will.

Add your heart and soul and voice to this discernment process every Sunday morning from 10:00-10:45 a.m. Pray for the church, for the Session, and for you as a member to be open to God's leading. Pray this simple prayer honestly and fervently, **"Not my will, but thy will be done here at Mulberry Presbyterian Church, O Lord."**

July Session Highlights

- After Jack Guy's opening prayer and devotion, we read *A Covenant of Openness* and scriptural teachings about idealism, dedication, and love. We then prayed for members of the congregation and the church as a whole.
- Our Grant was approved by Presbytery for \$500 to build a new website.
- Our Seminary Intern, Ken Fuquay, will start Sunday, August 15 with his Lay Committee being Mike Hood, Jana Barnette, and Linda Sadler.
- A Stewardship seminar supported by the Presbytery will be held in August. Glenda and Sonny Brown intend to go.
- We heard reports about Presbytery from Earl Springs and Youth Triennium by Kayla Sadler.
- Communion was approved for August 1 and Fred Holder was approved to preach for Homecoming October 17, 2010
- The next Session meeting will be on August 22 at 8:00 AM and September 19 at 6:00 PM.
- We set a Session retreat for September 11 to continue to discuss the Transformation Process.
- The in-depth Self Study from the Consultants was discussed at length and various Session members agreed to take different questions about history, structure, membership, and core beliefs.



Ken Fuquay to Become Intern at Mulberry

Ken Fuquay, a third-year student at Union Presbyterian Seminary in Charlotte, will begin a two-term (six-month) internship at Mulberry on August 15, 2010. The internship will run from August 2010 to April 2011 at which time Ken will graduate from Union Presbyterian Seminary with a Master of Arts in Christian Education.

While Ken is at Mulberry, he will be observing, reviewing, and participating in the Christian education program. Chris will be his supervisor at the church, and a lay committee composed of Mike Hood, Linda Sadler and Jana Barnette will meet with Ken on a monthly basis.

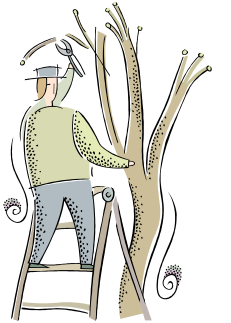
At the center of the internship is what the Seminary terms "theological reflection." Theological reflection will require Ken to examine and evaluate his activities at Mulberry in the light of the Reformed tradition, which has been a central focus of the first two years of his studies, and it will be the basis of two reports he will prepare as part of the requirements for his internship.

We look forward to working with Ken over the next few months. Welcome, Ken!

Transformation Thoughts by Linda Sadler

As a teacher, I had always heard, "If you keep doing the same things over and over, you will get the same results." This is so true! I believe Mulberry has stayed the same from the time I first visited many years ago until now. That is NOT all bad. However, looking at it another way, it also means that Mulberry is not growing - not dying or dead, but in need of a little reviving, like most of us do at certain times in our lives.

As part of the transformation process, Mulberry will be given the chance to revive and grow. I attended a leadership transformation process workshop several weeks ago, and I encourage all members of Mulberry to grow in their understanding of the transformation process by attending these meetings. As Sharon Whitley has said, if you don't participate in the process, you won't know what is going on. One of the ideas from the leadership training that really got my attention had to do with the pruning process. John 15:2 says "[The Lord] cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit, He will prune so that it will be even more fruitful." The transformation process could prune Mulberry to produce more fruit, and when fruit is produced, God is glorified. Sometimes pruning is not fun and may even be painful, but whatever hardships Mulberry faces, God is involved. We should let God do His work and not resist. Our attitude indicates whether or not we are cooperating with God's plan, reflected by our obedience and total surrender to Him. We can and should trust God, who never makes a mistake, and remain optimistic and trustful of the future He has in store for us. Are you an optimist or a pessimist? Consider this poem:



*Two frogs fell into a deep cream bowl; one was an optimistic soul;
But the other took the gloomy view, I shall drown," he cried, "and so will you."
So with a last despairing cry, he closed his eyes and said, "Goodbye."
But the other frog, with a merry grin said, "I can't get out, but I won't give in!
I'll swim around till my strength is spent. For having tried, I'll die content."
Bravely he swam until it would seem his struggles began to churn the cream.
On the top of the butter at last he stopped. And out of the bowl he happily hopped.
What is the moral? It's easily found. If you can't get out-keep swimming around!*

Let's be optimistic, Mulberry, so that we can swim out and grow. Stay positive and turn it over to God; He knows what He is doing so we must have faith. Remember Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you...plans to give you a future..." God knows Mulberry's future and we can have hope. This does not mean that we will be spared pain and hardship, but it does mean God will see us through to a glorious conclusion. Having children here at Mulberry, it is reassuring knowing that they will be a part of the newly pruned Mulberry Presbyterian Church. In the past, Mulberry has made decisions that were very difficult and it survived and grew. We will not experience God's blessings unless we step out in faith. Let's do it!