
NEWS OF THE CIRCLES

September, 2008

Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled

By Charlene Stephenson

Margaret McPoland was born in 1915. At this time, Woodrow Wilson was present, and the United States had not entered World War I. The Nobel Prize in physics was awarded to Sir William Bragg for his analysis of the crystal structure of x-rays. The one millionth Ford car was assembled. A postage stamp cost two cents, and the film to see was "Birth of a Nation."



continued on page 2

"School Memories"

Do you remember when each day was as bright and fresh as a new box of crayons? A sharpened yellow pencil, a juicy red apple and vivid autumn trees of orange and gold – these are the colors of each new school year. Several Methodist women and I have agreed to share our memories of school.

On the first day of school, I remember arriving for class a few minutes late. My mother and I stood at the door and watched a class of busy first graders working quietly. The children sat at large tables, busily attacking a coloring activity. Mama saw a vacant chair. "That looks like a sweet little girl. Go and sit by her," she said. As usual, Mama was right! The little girl was Melinda Maddox. She and her twin brother, Mike were my first grade teacher's children. Together we discovered the magic sounds of A,E,I,O,U and learned to read with Dick, Jane, and Sally. Twelve years later we graduated together. On March 1, 2007, Hillcrest Elementary School was destroyed when a tornado roared through Enterprise, Alabama. The school may be gone, but my memories of that first day of school will always be with me.

Did you know that Alabama Educational Television was the first educational network in the United States? Verner Elementary in Tuscaloosa was near the University of Alabama campus. The students there often had the opportunity to participate in programs sponsored by educational television. Kay Wilson recalls walking with her third grade class on several occasions to the television station to sing the state song of Alabama. Julia Tutwiler would have been proud to have heard their live performance of "Alabama, Alabama, We Will Aye Be True To Thee." What a Great Performance this must

continued on page 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 "Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled"
- 1 "School Memories"
- 3 "Big Wheels Keep On Turning"
- 4 Christmas Luncheon Plans
- 4 Hamby Antique Booth

At ninety-three, Margaret McPoland has wonderful memories of Jasper, Walker County, and the First United Methodist Church. Her grandfather, James Wiley Shepherd, served at various times as county superintendent of education, sheriff, and probate judge. He and his wife, Eustacia Palmer Shepherd, raised seven children. The Shepherd family was active in the Methodist church, and Margaret's mother, Annie Lou, stated that the family rarely missed a service. This tradition of faith was passed to the next generation, and, as Margaret recalled, her Aunt Willie Shepherd Freeman "opened and closed" the church doors for its many services.

Margaret's mother, Annie Lou, was a gifted artist. She taught art in Jasper at the school on Academy Hill. Many of her beautiful paintings and the china she painted are displayed in Margaret's home. Her mother's love of art can be seen in Margaret, who also painted. Her niece, Cindy McPoland Rowland and her daughter Lauren share their grandmother's artistic talents.

Eyebrows were raised when Margaret's mother wed Michael McPoland. How could a girl with a strong Methodist heritage marry a Catholic? Many declared she was doomed to Hell, but the Shepherds stood by their daughter. Despite the doomsayers' predictions, the marriage thrived and was blessed with three children – Margaret, John, and Emily Kathryn. Brother "Johnny Mac" was a noted radio personality in Jasper for many years. He is remembered for his wit and sense of humor. Sister Emily Kathryn settled in Baltimore, Maryland.

Margaret recalls when the streets were first paved in Jasper. She had a good view of the event, because she was living in the home on East 19th Street where Mrs. Quigley's Tea Room is located. Another memory she has of early 20th century Jasper was when noted evangelist Bob Jones came to town for a tent revival. "Everyone got religion that week!" she said.

Although raised Catholic, Margaret remembers visiting all the churches. At this time, the church was the center of social life in small towns. "Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian – I went to all the youth activities," she said. She often attended the Methodist Church with her Aunt

Willie Freeman. Sunday School was taught by Ruth Long, and she remembers their favorite hymn was "Onward Christian Soldiers."

Work has always played a significant role in Margaret's life. After graduating from Walker County High School, she worked for the telephone company for eight years. Next she worked for Jasper Heading Company. This company produced barrels and barrel staves. Employment with Alabama Power Company began in 1947. She began as a home service advisor, but soon found that the job required her to wear many hats. She also worked at the switchboard and dispatched radio messages to the work crews. Although efficient in many areas, Margaret especially enjoyed working the switchboard. She worked thirty-two years with Alabama Power, retiring in 1979.

Margaret McPoland has lived through two major world wars and numerous uprisings. She has seen the economy rise and fall and felt lucky during the Depression "to have a nickel." She has seen great strides in transportation and communication. Like most of us, Margaret is no stranger to joy or sorrow. Her vision is dimmed by macular degenerative disease, but her Christian vision remains clear. She lives each day according to her mother's favorite Bible verse, "Let not your heart be troubled . . ." (John 14:1).

Talking with Margaret McPoland was a pleasure. Together we returned to a time when families shared meals together and walked to most destinations. She recalled that neighbors took time to visit and no one needed to lock their doors. She remembered, before the advent of chain stores, when all the merchants were personal friends. As I left her home that warm September afternoon, these passages led me to understand how she has maintained a happy and productive life. They are: "A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance." (Proverbs 5:13) and "He who has a merry heart has a continual feast." (Proverbs 15:15).

<p>New Circles to be drawn soon! If you would like for your name to be removed from the list, please contact Barbara Wilson at 221-3267.</p>
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“Big Wheels Keep on Turning”

“Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stops these couriers from the swift completion of their approved rounds.” These words, first used by Heroditus in 500 BC, are often used to describe the United States Postal Service. They also describe the dedication of those who volunteer for the Meals on Wheels program.

In John 21:17 Jesus admonished Peter, “If you love me, feed my sheep.” While there are many ways one can fulfill this command, volunteers at the First United Methodist Church in Jasper have chosen to serve through the Meals on Wheels program. Since 1995, this vital service, under the direction of Ruth Wright and her able assistant, Pastor Bill Wright, has helped meet the nutritional need of many senior citizens in Walker County. With great pride Ruth explains, “Since we began serving meals in 1995, we have never failed to serve a meal. Our volunteers are splendid.” In honor of Ruth’s service, the United Methodist Women have donated the funds to serve meals to one recipient for a year.

For the past thirteen years, Ruth has investigated, visited, logistically plotted, directed and revised the rolls and routes of her volunteers. Her mission is to see that those on the route will receive a hot meal and a friendly greeting faithfully delivered five days a week, rain or shine. Working in pairs, with alternates available, Jasper’s First United Methodist Volunteers deliver twelve to fourteen hot meals each Monday through Friday. While the recipients may change and routes vary, it is a rewarding experience for the volunteers. Not only the enjoyment of a hot meal, but the chance to visit with the delivery person, brightens a face and brings a smile at each home.

“Feed my sheep.” This command is being met by volunteers each Monday through Friday between 11:00 and 11:45 a.m. Those on the list eagerly await the knock on the door and the greeting, “Meals on Wheels – sure hope you’re hungry today!” More friendly faces are needed. If you wish to answer Christ’s command, Ruth Wright would like to talk with you!

have been! Perhaps this experience was a catalyst for Kay’s lifelong participation in church and community choirs.

Sara Megan Cain Johnson remembers that all the girls felt special when Mrs. Jean Lollar, her fourth grade teacher, would sit at the table with them during lunch. Once, she showed them how to apply lipstick. While Mrs. Lollar always stressed the importance of academics, this brief lesson on personal grooming had a lasting effect. It is a skill that Sara Megan uses each day.

Judy Brown Hager had committed the unforgivable sin. Too much talking!! Shamefully, fearfully, she stood in the hall. What would her teacher do? What if the principal saw her? Worse yet, what if her mother learned the news? A few minutes ticked by, but they seemed like hours. Then, her prayers were answered! The principal stayed in his office, and the teacher allowed her to return to class. Mrs. Brown never learned of her daughter’s misadventures. A greatly reformed first grader completed the year with no further incidents of talking. Experience is a dear teacher!

Mary Boteler taught first grade for twenty-two years. Many of our church members have her to thank for their reading skills. Mary stated, “I had few discipline problems, because the children knew I loved them.” Once, when she had to leave school early, the principal agreed to dismiss her class. When one child lingered, the principal reminded him to hurry along. “I’m waiting for Mrs. Boteler,” he said. “She gives us a kiss each day when we go home.” He left that day without a kiss.

This school year is off to a great start. Jasper City and Walker County schools are striving to meet the needs of our students. From kindergarten to college, remember to encourage our students. And, if you can read, remember to thank a teacher!

By Charlene Stephenson



Can you guess the identity of these “school girls” that you go to church with, serve the Lord with, and see regularly?

Christmas Luncheon Plans Being Made !

The annual United Methodist Women's Christmas Luncheon will be held on Monday, December 8, 2008, in the fellowship hall of the church. Plans are in the works for a memorable day. Keep a close watch for ticket information to be published in the church's newsletter or contact your Circle leader.



Allison Weatherbee, author and employee of Camp ASCCA, will be our featured speaker, and she will be giving her testimony on how God has supported and lifted her up throughout a life of challenge. It promises to be a fabulous day!

Contact your Circle Leader today about being a table hostess or to offer to prepare a dish.

Hamby Antique Booth Benefits UMW

At the next couple of General Meetings, there will be a table with Christmas items for sale. These items, from our Hamby Antique Booth, will range from Lenox Christmas vases to homemade ornaments. Some are new – some are not so new. We have had so many wonderful donations, that we thought you would like to get a preview of what we have to offer for the holiday season. You will want to continue your shopping by visiting us “up at the chicken houses.”

We also have some lovely furniture pieces that are priced to sell: console table, lamp table, a beautiful mirror, and much more! Come soon to see what we have to offer you and your home decorating needs.

As always, if you have anything you would like to donate to the UMW Antique Booth, contact Carol Mitchell at 221-4372 or e-mail her at carolcmitchell@bellsouth.net.

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