

August
2009

Blacknall

Memorial Presbyterian Church



Dear Blacknall Family,

We are in the midst of the season of the year when we are welcoming new friends into our fellowship at Blacknall. In this season we thought it might be good to hear from a visitor to Blacknall who was with us for only one Sunday this summer. This letter (used by permission of the author) is a good reminder to us of God's Precious Ones sitting next to us and the gift of the Holy Spirit's presence as we gather together each Sunday.

On Sunday, I attended the Blacknall Presbyterian Church in Durham, North Carolina, a 93-year-old congregation near Duke University. I had e-mailed the church in advance and learned that, yes, it was a PCUSA church like mine back home and that, yes, there was an 11 o'clock service. That was good news: After two weeks on a dance journalism fellowship that has pushed me far out of my comfort zone, I wanted the familiar. I wanted the streamlined ritual I've known since birth. Just let me sing the hymns and follow a well-crafted, three-point, scripture-based, 20-minute sermon after which I feel much better, thanks – more balanced and at peace with my place in the kingdom. But the Presbyterian God, my old supporter and pot stirrer, had other ideas. . .

I had expected the hand-shaking and "Peace be with yous" that have infiltrated the modern church. At home in Missouri, I often walk into the sanctuary just a few minutes late to avoid this. Please, no body contact. Makes me sound cold, or distant, neither of which I am, not particularly. I'm a college teacher who practically pets my students once I know them. I'm the shoulder they cry on, the one they hurry to tell their good news. Same with close friends and family. But I do carry a wall around with me, one that snaps quickly and firmly into place.

So there I was amongst the Blacknall folks, three-quarters of the way back on the aisle, poised as ever to make a quick escape. Greetings out of the way, thank God, we moved on to singing. I had a hymnal out before I saw that the words were being projected onto a wall above a pianist. And oh no, there was a fiddler. And a guitarist. Oh no, no. Spare me the modernizing, the attempts to reach a younger audience, to be accessible to those for whom the traditional form of church is off-putting and chilly. I have enough of the new and the innovative to deal with at work: the practice of journalism for the 21st century, the education of iJournalists. And c'mon, man, I tweet, I text, I yelp, I ning. I listen to Jonny Greenwood and Alarm Will Sound. I use an HE washing machine and know by name the chickens whose eggs I eat. I try to be present in the present and lean forward into the future. But church is different. I want what I've always known.

It was in the hymns when I first began to feel a difference. These people were letting loose, drawing deep breaths and pushing them all back out in song.

*All creatures of our God and king
Lift up your voice and with us sing
Alleluia! Alleluia!*

(continued)

OK, I thought, I can do this. I love to sing, although my best repertoire is largely Billy Joel and musicals from the 1950s and '60s. So I sang loudly, too, doing my best to match the on-point pitch of the red-haired guy behind me, a tenor of sweet ability.

*Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
And praise the Spirit, Three in One!*

As I sang, I thought of my uncle Bill, who drowned last summer about this time of year, fishing in a pond on the family farm in Oklahoma. A gnome-like man with twinkling eyes, he loved his Quaker hymns and often cried when he sang them. I felt my shoulders relax and my heart give a little.

Then came the prayer of confession, and the minister asked us all to kneel. To kneel! I couldn't believe it. This is not a PCUSA thing to do. We remain seated and motionless except to stand for hymns and creeds. There is no talking, no crinkling of paper, no giggling, no excess motion of any kind. No kneeling. But, you know, when in Rome ... and I was still caught up in the flurry of emotion from the singing. So I glanced at the red-haired tenor — who smiled, which could be construed as excess motion — and dropped to my knees and bowed my head as the minister spoke to God on our behalf. Turns out, there's not a lot of room for kneeling, and I felt my breasts bump the rack of Bibles attached to the pew in front of me. I smelled, faintly, the fragrance of a woman in a pink suit seated one row up and the dry-cleaning scent of her husband's suit coat. "Forgive us, Lord, 'cuz we just fall short all the time and struggle to make joyous use of this beautiful life." That's not what the minister said. It's what I felt.

This feeling has been creeping up on me, a couple of times gently catching hold of my arm to get my attention. "Hey, you," this feeling presses. "Why are you so upset?" I practically shout back. "Bug off! I'm fine." But no, how can I be fine when these three weeks of dance camp — something I had sought out to bolster my skills as a journalism teacher, as someone determined to keep arts in the newsroom conversation — how can I be fine when these bodies and movement stir me up so much? I had spent the past two weeks crying in performances, crying later when I thought about the performances, biting the inside of my lower lip to keep from crying in discussions with the other fellows. Sometimes I leave the room, just to take a moment and breathe. What on earth is this about?

I have no answer yet. It's not hormonal; I'm over that time of life. It's not flashbacks; I have no sexual assault or violence in my past. I could speculate: I was chronically ill for a time, and I watched cancer take my beautiful best friend. Perhaps it's the matronly role I've assumed in teaching. Perhaps life just wore me out for a while. I don't know for sure.

I do know that something amazing has happened to me and that I have opened me up to more than the physicality of dancing. As I gave myself over to worship last Sunday, and to the palpable joy of a hard-singing congregation, I felt blessed by the body, by my body, for the first time in years. It all connected for me: mind, spirit and body. And I am changed. During the sermon — and yes, thank heavens, it was a well-crafted, three-point, scripture-based, 20-minute sermon — the minister talked about the difference between being a tourist and a pilgrim. "The pilgrim," he said, "is wholly invested in the journey."

As I walked past Blacknall Church this afternoon with one of the other fellows, I mentioned that I had gone there and loved it. "But I wouldn't have loved it two weeks ago," I said — and the magnitude of the shift within me registered.

Sometimes we feel like God, or the universe, is talking to us. I had that experience on Sunday.

Elizabeth Brixey

Youth Ministries

Blacknall Family Announcements

Middle School

Please pray for the middle school trip to Florida for The Great Escape! It's a great time for kids to get away, play games, swim, and hear about Jesus in a new way. Pray for the youth, that their hearts would be softened and that they would grasp the overwhelming love God has for them, and pray for the leaders as they walk with these young people in our church. Pray for safe travel, as we'll be loading the group onto a bus for the journey to Florida. The trip is **August 2-7**.

Rachel Baker	Elizabeth Ferguson	Nick Paulson
Leah Baucom	Grace French	Jake Pennigar
Gabriel Baucom	Alex Gould	Sarah Russell
Olivia Bland	Katrina Huff	Jacob Russell
Abby Chapman	Jenna Hutcheson	Kelsey Schaad
Whit Chapman	Sarah Mitchell	Kellie Schaefer
Kelin Dillon	Justin Mitchell	David Storelli
Samuel Fever	Lydia Parker	Zoe Whisenhunt

Leaders: Brad & Jamie Turnage, Barb Eyster, Artie Kamiya

Summer Picnic Sunday, August 2, 3 to 7pm Piney Wood Park

Are you pleased with your peas? Amazed by your basil? Do you scream for ice cream? Mark your calendar for a garden-themed church picnic on August 2 from 3 to 7pm at Piney Wood Park in Durham. Blacknall will provide meat (and vegetarian options) and drinks. You are encouraged to bring a side or dessert made with items from your garden. Non-gardeners are invited to bring a favorite summer food. Gardeners may also bring fruits, veggies or flowers to show or swap.



“COME ON IN!”
Congregational Welcome Lunch
Sunday, September 13
 Come on in to a potluck following the 11am service in the Fellowship Hall and Community Room. Through this annual event we welcome students from surrounding universities and NC School of Science and Math as well as newcomers of all ages and stages.
 Church provides beverages, plus chicken and Jimmy John's subs, and the folks in the congregation provide the side dishes, salads and desserts to make this a fulfilling and fun event in the life of our church. Meet our Duke Divinity student interns: Evan Cate, Dave Sittser, and Emily Leahy. For more information or to volunteer to help, contact Anne Paulson at apaulson1@nc.rr.com or 490-4813

Blacknall Missions

To Central America and Back

by Corie Green

One week prior to leaving Durham for Central America, I embarked on a journey with Blacknall, the Pain and Hope Pilgrimage. Preparing for weeks to see, understand, and listen to the people of our town, the Pilgrimage truly paved the way for my next steps. After a battle of mind and heart, asking questions of motivation and intentions, I left my job at Nortel for a somewhat unknown adventure in Guatemala and Costa Rica. I spent three weeks in Guatemala in the city of Antigua where I was tutored in Spanish six hours daily and then continued to Costa Rica for two months.

Antigua brought some unique experiences as I had come with very few plans and lots of time. While reading one night in my room, a surgeon knocked on the door; as it turns out she was my new housemate, eager to talk. After a few days in Antigua together, she invited me to Clinica Ezell, where she'd be performing surgeries. The following weekend I navigated the Guatemalan countryside via chicken buses to reach Monte Llano where the clinic is located. Within hours of arrival I was assisting with exams, surgeries, and interpreting. Talking with the women and families at the clinic and participating in surgeries was incredible. My intentions for Guatemala were nothing of this sort: God pulled me from my plans to study and dropped me into an operating room.

Encouraged by the few days at Clinica Ezell, I left Guatemala for Costa Rica where I would begin working with a nurse at Roblealto Child Care Association in San Jose. Life at Roblealto was just that, every day life. One day required anesthetics and stitches, the next day brought headaches and orthodontic appointments. While there are many beautiful places to see in Costa Rica, and many I did see, the highlight of the trip was being in relationship with the staff and families at Roblealto. I was welcomed and engaged from day one as I stumbled through most everyday activities. Every Thursday evening was dedicated to making home visits, where we would accompany children to their homes to see and evaluate their living circumstances. In a country as rich as Costa Rica, the poverty is still unimaginable. My final memories of Roblealto include my surprise birthday-farewell party at the Center. All gatherings at Roblealto seemed so pure, intentional, and genuine. At the party each staff member wrote and read a poem or speech they'd written for me; it was unforgettable. There are few words to describe the unique relationships built inside the walls of Roblealto as they are nothing I've experienced before.

While I greatly miss the life I have just left in Costa Rica, I am excited to be home in Durham and am anxious to begin the everyday with our community, knowing and investing in people here. My future plans include nursing school and a lot more of Durham, we will see what God has for me next.



Opportunities to serve

1. Pregnancy Support Services (PSS)

When one of our pregnant moms has a baby we respond with a outpouring of meals for the family. Would we be willing to demonstrate that same love and care to moms and dads outside our congregation who may not have a supportive community of family and friends as they go through pregnancy and childbirth?

PSS of Durham and Chapel Hill is looking for a team of people who would be willing to provide a meal for the members of their parenting classes. These classes are offered one Saturday every other month. If you would be interested in being a part of a team that would provide a simple lunch to support this ministry contact David Dunderdale at ddunderdale@blacknall.org or Mimi Every at mimi@pregnancysupport.org.

2. Provide a ride

Duke University is home to students from around the world. Getting to and from school can be quite an ordeal for international freshmen. If you would be willing to provide a ride for a **student arriving August 15 or 16**, please contact Natalie Eagleburger at 919-451-7237 or natre@gmail.com.

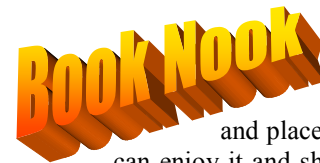
Blacknall Family Announcements

Fall 2009 Small Group Sign-Ups

Sign-ups will take place in August and the first meetings of the year will be the week of August 30*. There are many opportunities for new groups to form and whether you are new to the church or have been coming for a while, we welcome you to be a part of a group this year. Also, let us know if you would like to be coordinator or host this year. Some groups meet weekly, some bi-monthly.

There are many opportunities for "groups that are small" within the church to be creative in learning, growing, and sharing life together – let us know how we can help make this happen. Sign-up forms are available August 1. on the Blacknall Small Groups website <http://blacknallsg.wordpress.com/>. Also, a sign-up table will be available for you to visit on Sunday, August 16 and 23. If you have questions or have trouble getting to the website, please contact the Small Groups team representative at smallgroups@blacknall.org or 919-768-3616.

*Some groups may choose to alter their schedule based on group members' schedules



Reading is such a gift from God. It can expand your mind or soothe your soul, relax you or challenge you. Reading can sweep you away into another time and place or force you to confront the here and now. Any age can enjoy it and sharing books with others has its own special fellowship. It's almost the perfect activity. Too bad it doesn't burn many calories. Oh well, you can read on the treadmill – just not while driving! Why not wander into the library and treat yourself to a big helping of reading this week? Here's what's new in the stacks:

Take Two by Karen Kingsbury – Second in the *Above the Line* series, Filmmakers Chase Ryan and Keith Ellison are gaining respect in Hollywood and are on the verge of truly changing culture through the power of film. But what price will they pay in their personal relationships?

Offworld by Robin Parrish c Upon the return of NASA's first manned mission to Mars, the crew finds the unthinkable – every man, woman, child, and animal has vanished. They set out to discover where everyone has gone – and how to get them back – only to realize they may not be as alone as they thought.

Deadlock by Robert Liparulo – In this exciting sequel to *Deadfall*, newspaper columnist John Hutchinson is determined to bring down powerful arms dealer Brendan Page. Yet he's just one man up against impossible odds – with no Plan B.

The Girl in the Orange Dress: Searching for a Father Who Does Not Fail by Margot Starbuck – A fabulous first entry into the publishing world, and you know the author! A born storyteller, this time Margot recounts her own spiritual search, in all its messy glory, to find the love she'd been longing for all her life. You're invited to come along too.

The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith by Timothy Keller – Keller unfolds an unexpected message in the familiar parable of the prodigal son. You'll see Christianity in a whole new way while learning how Christ's followers are *supposed* to love.

Women's Retreat

October 16-18, 2009

"The Truth about the God who is with you and for you!"

Speaker - Margot Hausmann (artist, writer, PCUSA minister, Blacknall member)

Blue Ridge Assembly, Black Mountain, NC

Registration will begin in late September

For more information, contact Susan Kinghorn at susankinghorn@yahoo.com

Blacknall Family Announcements

The gifts of God from the people of God...

		YTD Budget	\$661,290
2009 weekly Budget	\$22,043	YTD Income	\$553,538
Tithes & Offerings 7/26	\$26,483	YTD Expenses	\$573,786
Covenant Campaign Total Borrowed			\$1,100,000
Covenant Campaign Loan Balance 7/26			\$57,937

PAYING BLACKNALL'S MONTHLY EXPENSES

All of us need income to pay our monthly expenses. It is also important for Blacknall to have your gifts to meet our operational expenses and our commitments to all our local, campus and overseas missionaries.

With many of you on vacation or out of town our gift receipts are traditionally lower while our monthly expenses continue. Blacknall must borrow from our cash reserve to meet all our expenses.

Your finance committee members encourage you to continue to give part of your yearly gift on a regular or monthly basis to help meet these summertime expenses. Thank you for your consideration.

Monthly Schedule

Sunday

8:30 & 11:00AM Worship
 9:30-11:15 Library Open
 9:45 AM Sunday School
 5:00 PM International Missions (1st Sun– even months)
 6:00 PM Prayers for Youth
 6:30 PM Communion & Prayers (3rd Sun)
 Prayers for Missionaries (1st Sun)

Monday

7:00 AM Outreach Comm. (2nd Mon)
 7:00 PM Community Outreach Comm. (1st Mon)
 5:00 PM Finance Comm. (3rd Mon)
 7:30 PM Diaconate (1st & 3rd Mon) Session (2nd & 4th Mon)
 Family Life Comm. (1st Mon)

Monday (continued)

8:00 PM Building & Property (1st Mon)
 Congregational Care (1st Mon)
 Hospitality Comm. (1st Mon)

Tuesday

7:30 PM Worship Comm. (1st Tues)
 Personnel Comm. (3rd Tues)

Wednesday

6:45 AM Men's Bible Study
 10:30 AM LC's (Seniors Ministry)

Thursday

8:00 AM Prayers for Renewal

7:00 PM Narcotics Anonymous (Community Room)

Saturday

7:00 PM Narcotics Anonymous (Community Room)

Email: churchoffice@blacknall.org
 Web Site: www.blacknall.org

Church Staff

Allan Poole - Pastor
 David Dunderdale - Pastor
 Dave Stuntz - Music Ministry
 Amy Rowell - Children's Ministry - Elementary
 Beth Solie - Children's Ministry - Preschool
 Brad Turnage - Director Youth Ministries
 Caroline Inazu - Middle School Youth Ministry
 Margaret Frothingham - Congregational Care
 Diane Beacham - Finance
 Dare Nicholson - Associate Office Admin.
 Jan Smart - Associate Office Admin.
 Terry Simpson - Facilities Manager
 Chris Blumhofer - Duke Divinity Intern