

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH A CELEBRATION OF MISSION:

OUR GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS: WHERE WE'VE BEEN & WHERE GOD IS LEADING US NOW



“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

- Acts 1:6



THE EXTERIOR OF THE CHURCH IN JIANGYIN

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THE DEDICATION SERVICE AT THE TRAINING CENTER IN 2009

Jiangyin, China

First Presbyterian Church has had a long relationship with Christians in China, one that has developed in three stages—contact, reconnection, and partnership. Over a hundred years ago, in 1895, George and Emma Chadbourn Worth left Wilmington for Jiangsu Province on the eastern Chinese coast. George and Emma were children of First Presbyterian, and shortly after George finished medical school they were married and off to China. Their first contact with China came at the town of Wuxi, but soon they were transferred to nearby Jiangyin, on the banks of the Yangzi River northwest of Shanghai. For the next 54 years, beginning with the Worths, and then continuing with other Presbyterian medical and educational missionaries, First Presbyterian Church actively underwrote the Jiangyin mission. For example, the Women’s Auxiliary of Wilmington Presbytery and the women of First Presbyterian Church raised \$4,000 for medical work in Jiangyin. Another benefactor, James Sprunt, donated \$10,000 for the Jiangyin mission and made additional annual gifts. Between 1902 and 1951 the Women’s Auxiliary and members of First Presbyterian Church (including Sprunt and then his estate after his death in 1924) contributed \$566,688 toward the support of the Jiangyin mission and its staff.

In 1951, the Jiangyin mission closed under pressure from the Chinese Communist government, and the missionaries returned home. Between 1966 and 1976, the years of the Cultural Revolution in China, Chinese Christians, as well as all other religious believers, were persecuted. Since that time, however, official tolerance for religious groups in China has improved. In 2007, Dr. Ernie Thompson, together with Alex Munroe and Fred Butler, Jr. of First Presbyterian, and Lucy Worth, granddaughter of George Worth, accepted an invitation to go to China and visit Jiangyin. During the Sunday worship service, Dr. Thompson brought greetings from the First Presbyterian congregation and delivered the sermon. In so doing, he was the first Westerner to preach there since the closure of the mission station in 1951. This visit provided the basis for the reconnection of First Presbyterian with the congregation in Jiangyin.

The context for Chinese Christianity has recently changed. Many churches have been reopened and other new ones begun. Chinese Christians are also producing their own Bibles. In 2007 the Amity Printing Company brought out its 50 millionth copy of the Bible in Chinese, with the capacity to print 10-12 million more copies annually. Chinese Christians are proud of these accomplishments, though they recognize that many challenges remain. The nature of some of these obstacles became clearer in 2008 when an invited delegation of pastors and government officials from Jiangyin, Wuxi, and Jiangsu Province came to Wilmington. Church leaders at First Presbyterian wanted to reciprocate the earlier visit to Jiangyin and to further the relationship between the two congregations. As First Presbyterian members listened to their guests, they learned of the need for leadership development in the Chinese Christian Church. For example, in Jiangyin just three pastors serve 14 Protestant churches with combined memberships of 19,000. The fellowship, worship, and information exchanged between the two congregations did provide the basis for the third stage—a partnership in which specific projects, such as assistance with a training center in Jiangyin, could combine with ongoing conversations, prayers, and future opportunities. In 2009 a delegation from First Presbyterian returned to Jiangyin and joined in the celebration of the opening of the training center. The hope for the future is to nurture a relationship of mutual respect and support and to develop this partnership further.

Leogane, Haiti

First Presbyterian Church's mission efforts in Haiti began in the late 1970's when Dr. John Codington, general surgeon and brother of full time missionary Herbert Codington, began regular trips to L'Hopital Ste. Croix in Leogane, a village southwest of Port au Prince, near the epicenter of the January 12, 2010 earthquake. Codington's last trip was interrupted by the turmoil surrounding the forced departure of dictator Jeanne-Claude (Baby Doc) Duvalier in 1986. Ophthalmologist Dr. Fred Butler began his trips to Haiti in 1987 and his involvement with medical and agricultural missions has resulted in more than 60 trips by many other FPC members, professionals and laypersons, youth and young adults. One of the lasting results of these efforts was the enlargement and upgrading of the freestanding Eye Clinic on the grounds of HSC where cataract surgery is performed. Some groups have conducted off site medical clinics in the surrounding countryside. Others have participated in the agricultural mission project CODEP supported by The Haiti Fund (FPC New Bern). It is with the help of this organization that native leader Edvy Durandice was brought to Wilmington in 1997 for the successful treatment of cancer. He was a member of our church family during his six month stay and is today a leader in the CODEP project. The earthquake of 2010 has interrupted the work at HSC, but plans are underway to resume work there as conditions allow. Additional information is available from the PCUS Haiti Mission website, Medical Benevolence Foundation and The Haiti Fund .



A CATARACT PROCEDURE PERFORMED AT THE EYE CLINIC IN HAITI



L'HOPITAL STE. CROIX, LEOGANE, HAITI BEFORE 2010 EARTHQUAKE

Tabasco, Mexico

The Tabasco Partnership is a covenant between the Presbytery of Coastal Carolina (PCC) and El Presbiterio del Golfo de Mexico (PGM) formed on March 8, 2003 for witness to each other and the world about God's reconciling work of love through Jesus Christ. To this end, witnesses from Presbyterian congregations in Tabasco have made annual visits to North Carolina to give living expression to the unity of the Church in Christ and to strengthen Hispanic ministry in southeastern North Carolina. In return, witnesses from Presbyterian congregations in North Carolina have made annual visits to Tabasco to discover ways to be in mission WITH people in other countries rather than in mission FOR others. Members of Presbyterian congregations in Tabasco and North Carolina have engaged in mission activities together as witness to those without Christ about God's great love that crosses all national, political, cultural and national diversities.

From the beginning, the PCC has supported the PGM's long term missions to improve healthcare effectiveness in rural neighborhoods and to deliver humanitarian aide to residents in flood prone areas. Most recently (January, 2010), the PCC fielded an eighteen member mission team to Tabasco to perform site preparation in a rural area for a Presbyterian physical therapy center and to deliver the special offering collected during December, 2009 as a contribution to the cost of building the foundation for the physical therapy center.

Cultural exchange and fellowship are also important features of the partnership. The many adult mission trip exchanges that have occurred annually since 2004 will be supplemented with a youth group from Tabasco to North Carolina during August 2010. First Presbyterian Church of Wilmington should consider hosting the Tabasco youth during our Beach Reach program organized for our youth each year during August.



TABASCO MISSION TEAM REMOVING RUBBLE FROM FUTURE BUILDING SITE



PRESBYTERY MISSION TEAM WITH TABASCO RESIDENTS

Tshikaji, Congo

Over 50 years ago we at First began our association with the Congo ministry. Then the country was called the Belgian Congo and today it is the Democratic Republic of Congo. Our initial contact with the Christian Medical Institute of the Kasai was with our own members Dr. Sandy Marks, a dentist, and his wife Katherine, a registered nurse, where they served in this ministry's infancy. Located in a town called Tshikaji, near the city of Kananga, this small seed has grown to a major teaching institute, despite periodic times of war, famine and political instability. After the Marks' return to the States, our support and involvement gradually declined until 2007.

We were reintroduced to this ministry through Mike and Nancy Haninger. He is an OB/GYN and she is a registered mid-wife nurse. Mike directed the 160-bed teaching hospital, schools of nursing and family practice medical school students. Nancy directed patient care, educated village health workers, and supervised a regional nutrition rehabilitation center for severely malnourished children. Your financial support has saved many lives as we were able to buy mosquito nets for mothers with newborn infants, the planting of moringa trees whose leaves provide much of the children's nutrition and the support of a small elementary school founded by Nancy. The Good Shepherd Hospital and its related facilities serve over 38,000 patients annually.

Youth Missions

The youth ministry at First Presbyterian Church has a vibrant and growing missions program. Each summer the Middle School youth and the High School youth each engage in a week-long missions trip in various places in the United States and around the world. Our destinations in the past have included Mandeville, Jamaica; Reynosa, Mexico; New Orleans, Louisiana; Atlanta, Georgia; and Charlotte, North Carolina. The youth engage in a wide range of activities on these trips. They have constructed cement block homes and mixed mountains of concrete to pour roofs and floors for these dwellings. Youth have provided leadership for VBS type camps both here and abroad. They have served in soup kitchens, used gallons of paint to cover a countless number of walls, helped provide care for children at camps and day care centers, as well as completed many landscaping and gardening tasks. Each summer 40-50 youth participate in the mission trips supported by First Presbyterian Church. It is by far the highlight of the summer for these youth and an experience that shapes their faith in a unique and significant way.

Domestic Missions

First Presbyterian Church has long been committed to mission work, not only around the world, but here in the United States. In the past several years teams have mostly been dedicated to providing disaster relief to different areas of the country. With the help and cooperation of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, teams have traveled to Iowa and New Orleans in the past few years. We hope to continue to provide our congregation with the opportunity to serve on a domestic mission trip on an annual basis.



INFANTS AND THEIR MOTHERS ENJOYING NEW MOSQUITO NETS DONATED BY FPC



YOUTH TEAMS COOKING AT CHARLOTTE RESCUE MISSION



ONE OF MANY BUCKET LINES MOVING SAND, GRAVEL, AND CONCRETE IN JAMAICA



OUR IOWA MISSION TEAM HARD AT WORK