



INDEPENDENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Christ our Cornerstone

Living River

A place where creation flows.

A place where faith flows.

July 2011

Vol. 64, Issue 7

VIEWS FROM INDEPENDENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Faith Flows: IPC & Living River

"Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water." John 7:38

Camping has long been a cornerstone of youth ministry. Outdoor education and camping experiences are a setting for meaningful outreach to young people. As part of their camping experience, in the company of peers and counselors, youth can find space for spirituality in their lives and the awakening of a commitment to Christianity that will serve as the foundation of their adult faith.

For both young people and grown-ups, *Living River: A Retreat on the Cahaba* is the camp and conference center that will serve our Presbytery and church community, and be a place to reach out to others through environmental education. This summer, IPC will join the other 86 churches of the Presbytery by conducting its campaign to help raise the funds needed to create Living River.

In this significant and beautiful place, we at IPC will help build Living River. It will be a retreat where young people will continue to discover the awakening power of an outdoor camping experience with a Christ-centered message. It will also be a place where adults, families and congregations can step away from the demands of their everyday lives and listen to God's voice.



IPC Youth at Living River

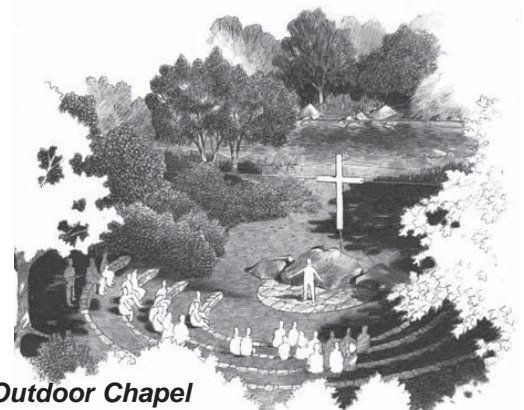
In the presence of so many examples of God's creation, Living River will invite a renewal and rebirth of faith that will sustain and guide us for generations to come.

"When I was a young girl, church camp had a profound influence on my life. At camp, in nature, God was everywhere. I felt His presence immediately. I want that for my daughter. I want that for my church and community, and I still want that for myself. A place of peace and beauty. A place to feel the presence of God. Living River is that place."

*--Teresa Pulliam, IPC Member,
Living River Board Member*

Watch for opportunities to learn more about the mission of Living River and our participation in building this sacred space. We ask that you prayerfully consider how God is calling you to support Living River.

--Living River Task Force



IPC Outdoor Chapel



The Rev. Dr. Conrad Sharps

Planting the Seeds of Thanksgiving and Faith

A man was watching his 85-year-old neighbor plant a small peach tree in his backyard. In a rather insensitive manner he said, "You don't expect to eat any peaches from that tree I hope?" Taking a short break from his labors the neighbor responded, "No, at my age I know I won't.

But all my life I've enjoyed peaches, and never from a tree I planted myself. I'm just trying in my own way to say 'thank you' to those who planted for me."

We live in a world in which it is easy to become obsessed with our own garden, with only fruit we can personally harvest. As disciples of Christ, however, we must nurture and witness to a better way, a better attitude and a true concern for others. We, like the wise, elderly neighbor, also need to model an "attitude of gratitude"! We need to pause to say "thank you" not only to those who have shown us a better way, but also to God who has shown us the way of true salvation in Jesus Christ.

As people of the Judeo-Christian faith, we should acknowledge and give thanks often to the creator and sustainer of all that is good. We should thank God for all God has planted and prepared for us to richly enjoy, and for providing all we truly need. We see this very clearly as we are called to a **stewardship of creation** in our opportunity at Living River.

The Living River Task Force describes the Project: *"In this significant and beautiful place, the Presbytery will build Living River, a retreat where young people will continue to discover the awakening power of an outdoor camping experience with a Christ-centered message. Where adults, families, and congregations can also step away from the demands of their everyday lives and make space to listen to God's voice.*

We have come to recognize that the renewal of faith we hope will take place at Living River is more than incidentally related to the opportunity and responsibility placed in our hands through ownership of this special piece of property. In return for what Living River gives to us, we will also pledge to be good stewards of the land and the river. We come to see that the mission of Living River is to help adults and children deepen their connection to God as they take part in understanding and becoming caretakers of a globally significant river."

With an attitude of gratitude and in humble devotion we should say "thank you" to God, who has prepared the way, shown us the way and given us the sweetest of fruit life has to offer: the privilege of knowing and sharing Jesus Christ. In a place like Living River we can enjoy this privilege in wonderful ways.

And given that we have so much for which to be thankful, perhaps now we should pause and give thought to what seed of abundance and faith we should plant in order that those who follow after us will know that all good things come from God through Jesus Christ our Lord. **"O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever."** (Psalm 136:1)

"We are called to a stewardship of creation at Living River."

LIVING IN SERVICE TO OTHERS...

SUGGESTED FOOD

PANTRY ITEMS

July 3

Canned Fruits/
Vegetables

July 10

Soups or Soup Mixes

July 17

Crackers/Muffin Mixes

July 24

Cereal &

Dry or Canned Milk

July 31

Peanut Butter & Jelly

First Light Women's Shelter Items

for July

Arts & Crafts Supplies

Conrad Sharps to lead a Sunday School class this Fall

We're in the midst of summer right now, but fall will be here before we know it, and with fall will come new Sunday School offerings. Of special note will be a course led by Dr. Conrad Sharps! Entitled **"Life Applications,"** the discussion course will focus on one or more lectionary passages with an occasional discussion and analysis of current news items. The emphasis will be on applying God's word to our lives. The course will meet in the Chapel, and everyone is welcome!

Paul Romjue, Director Christian Education

Upcoming Events at IPC

- July 2 *IPC Choir Concert, St. Francis Church, Bratislava*
- July 3 *IPC Choir Concert, Valtice Castle, Slovakia*
- July 4 *McLelland Organ Recital & Choir Concert and Mass, St. Peter's Church, Vienna*
- July 5 *McLelland Organ Recital, St. Stephen's Cathedral, Vienna*
- July 9 *McLelland Organ Recital, Bamberg Cathedral, Germany*
- July 13 *McLelland Organ Recital, St. Wenzel's Church, Naumberg, Germany*
- July 13 *Youth Day Trip to Six Flags*
- July 20-24 *Montreat Middle School Conference*
- July 15-24 *IPC Mexico Mission Trip*
- July 25-29 *IPC Youth Mission Week at Whatley School*
- July 26 *IPC's 4th Quarter Lunch Bunch at 26/Twenty-six Restaurant*
- August 13 *Youth Canoe Trip - Living River Camp*
- August 21-27 *IPC week First Light Women's Shelter*
- August 28 *Living River Wrap Up. Sunday School Hour and Picnic at IPC*

Pastoral Care Needs: Summer 2011

For June, July and August 2011, the Rev. Lucy Turner, who is responsible for our Congregational Care & Counseling, is on sabbatical leave. Please remember her in your prayers during this time of renewal.

For your Congregational Care needs this summer:

Monday-Friday Contact Jeannine Usher (933-3694 or jusher@ipc-usa.org), Executive Assistant in Congregational Care & Counseling.

After hours and weekend emergencies:

You may contact any of our other ministers on their cell phone numbers:

- Conrad Sharps: 205-914-1584
- Susan Clayton: 205-908-6547
- Bobbie Epting: 205-533-1904

DEPARTMENTS

Worship

The Rev. Dr. Conrad Sharps,
Pastor, Head of Staff
933-1830

Music & Fine Arts

Dr. Jeff R. McLelland,
Director, Music and Fine Arts
933-3701

Education

Paul Romjue, Director,
Christian Education 933-3732

Cindy Coulter, Director,
Children's Ministries 933-3708

Aly Butts, Director Youth Ministries
933-3734

Nate Sell, Assistant Director
Youth Ministries 933-3708

Congregational Care & Counseling

The Rev. Ms. Lucy Turner, Associate
Pastor; Director, Congregational Care
933-3706

The Rev. Dr. Richard E. Pyburn
The Rev. Dr. Kenneth Wade
Counseling Associates
Dr. Pyburn: 933-3698
Dr. Wade: 933-3695

New Member Coordinator

Nancy Skinner, 933-3703

Community Ministries

The Rev. Ms. Susan Clayton, Associate
Pastor; Director, Community Ministries,
933-3709
Dale Head, Assistant Director, Community
Ministries, 933-3726

Finance

James Wooten, Executive Director,
IPC Foundation & Director, Finance,
933-3705

Stewardship & Development

The Rev. Ms. Bobbie Epting, Associate
Pastor; Director, Stewardship & Development
933-3729

IPC Day School

Jason Turner, Director, Day School,
933-3687

Administration

Libby Kidd, Director,
Operations & Administration
933-3704

President of Congregation

William W. Horton 419-5139

Vice-President of the Congregation

Lyda White 870-4333

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The Window is published for church members and friends. Please send comments to **Mary Ann Morrow, editor**, c/o IPC.

Photographs by Paul Romjue
Mason Fischer Photography **3**
& Virginia Jones Photography

LIBRARY NOTES

An Alabama Treasure

Alabama's legendary storyteller Kathryn Tucker Windham died Sunday, June 12 at her home in Selma. Paul Davis (former editor of the *Selma Times Journal*) described Kathryn Windham in a recent article, "She was just a good woman through and through. Right was right. Wrong was wrong. She knew the difference."

And she was an amazing storyteller. Our IPC Lukens Library currently has a display of some of her many books. Come to the library-- bring your children, and check out some books. Sit and read with your children and share your own family stories. She would like that.

The Kathryn Tucker Windham books in the IPC Library are: *It's Christmas!*, with ink drawings by Buz Crump; *The Bridal Wreath Bush*, illustrated by John Solomon Sandridge; *Twice Blessed*, with photographs by the author; and *Alabama: One Big Front Porch*, with illustrations by H. Roland Russell and photographs by the author.



The Library Committee



LIVING IN SERVICE TO OTHERS

IPC Members on the Move Around the Globe!

Africa

On May 30, 12 members of IPC left for a two-week mission trip to **Mwandi, Zambia**. This team included a number of young people: one rising high school Senior, and four young people who had graduated from colleges in May. In fact, of the 12 team members, only two had been to Mwandi previously—the rest were all first-timers!

The team returned safely to Birmingham on Monday, June 13, with wonderful tales to tell of their time in Africa. The trip was a meaningful and faith-building experience for every member of the team. You can read the daily emails from the team while they were away, and see a number of photos from their trip, on the IPC website. We are grateful to all of them for going to Zambia and representing Christ and IPC so faithfully with the people of Mwandi. Deep relationships were built among the team members, and between the team members and new friends from Mwandi. The trip will bear much fruit in many lives!



*"We gave our AMAZING cook at Simba House, Irene, a prayer shawl, made by our very own knitting group at IPC!"
--Adam Sutherland, Team Africa*

Rev. Susan Clayton



African Bags for Sale!

The Africa Mission Team has returned with 30 bags made by the women's sewing group at Mwandi, Zambia. These colorful bags are displayed at the second floor

art gallery and are \$25.00 each. Donations support the Infant Formula Program at the mission hospital to provide infant formula to local HIV+ mothers whose immune systems are too compromised to breastfeed their babies. Checks should be made payable to Betty Drennen and can be given to Betsy Middlebrooks or to Anna Stinnett.

Mexico

On July 15, 20 people will travel from IPC to **Piedras Negras, Mexico** as part of the IPC Mexico Mission Team. This group will work with Constructores Para Cristo to build a home with and for a Mexican family in this border town. The fearless leaders for this group will be **Murray and Diane Beck**, as it has been for so many years of faithful service! We have been taking teams to work with CPC for over 20 years. This trip provides a very concrete result: at the end of one week, the team will have constructed and dedicated one complete home. What a blessing to the family that will receive this home! This team will also be a mixture of youth and adults. **Please keep the Mexico team in your prayers while they are away from us from July 15-24.**

Vaya con Dios! Go with God!

First Light

The meal schedule for the First Light Women's Shelter is set for **August**, but we need some help. **Two dates are not filled, August 26 and 27. If you and your friends and/or family are able to take one of those nights, please let Betsy Middlebrooks know as soon as possible.** This worked very well last summer, as so many IPC groups are not meeting during the summer, and family groups taking an evening helped fulfill our church obligation to First Light. If you are unable to accept the date assigned to your group, please arrange a swap and notify Betsy Middlebrooks (933-3731 or bmiddlebrooks@ipc-usa.org). Remember to plan for 60 meals and to serve at 6:30 p.m. Don't forget that many of the guests at First Light have dietary restrictions, including diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. Meals that are healthy and nutritious are beneficial to all of us! Also, if you are able to volunteer to spend the night during this week, please contact Susan Clayton at 933-3709 or at sclayton@ipc-usa.org.

Thanks so much for your help and dedication!

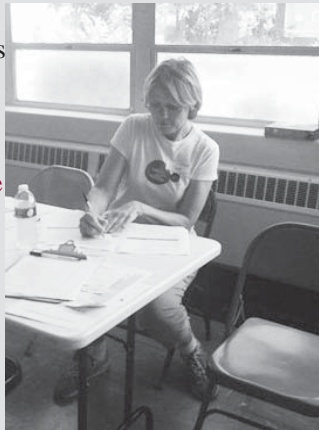
August 21-27, 2011

- Sunday, August 21— IPC Youth
- Monday, August 22—IPC Hunger Work Group
- Tuesday, August 23—IPC Topic Church School Class
- Wednesday, August 24—IPC Staff
- Thursday, August 25—Community Ministries Committee
- Friday, August 26 — _____
- Saturday, August 27 — _____

LIVING IN SERVICE TO OTHERS

Tornado Relief

Thank you, thank you to the many members of IPC who have responded to our neighbors devastated by the tornadoes of April 27! We received very generous financial contributions to the church for direct relief; many of you brought needed supplies for relief centers in affected areas; others have gone individually and worked in relief centers around our area; a number of folks helped us drive supplies into areas of need. **We have formed an Independent Presbyterian Church team with Hands On Birmingham.** We had our first team outing to do tornado relief on Saturday, June 18 as a group of nearly 30 members of IPC traveled to Pratt City to do work in the Tornado Relief Center at Scott School. There will be other opportunities to serve. If you would like to be part of the IPC team and be notified of future opportunities, please go to www.handsonbirmingham.org Once there, register yourself with this organization. Once registered, go to the Member Volunteer Center and click on "My Teams," then "Search All Teams," then search alphabetically for the IPC team and join it! That way, when I send emails out to the whole team about future opportunities, you will get the notice!



As we all know, there will be long-term rebuilding needed in the wake of the terrible destruction in our area. **We are going to be rebuilding for years to come, and IPC will stand alongside our neighbors for the duration.** We will keep you posted via the website and the Hands On Birmingham team of other opportunities to serve in tornado relief efforts. If you have questions, please feel free to contact Susan Clayton at (205) 933-3709 or sclayton@ipc-usa.org

*Rev. Susan Clayton, Associate Pastor
Director, Community Ministries*



Funeral Ushers Urgently Needed

Ushering at funeral and memorial services can be a most rewarding experience for you as well as a tangible way for you to offer your support to those who grieve. We urgently need to expand our list of volunteers (men and women) for this important ministry at IPC. Since we only have one or two days' notice before a service is held, we understand that some volunteers will not be available when we need them. This makes it even more important to have a large pool of volunteers. Please prayerfully consider whether you can assist with this vital ministry ... and contact Jeannine Usher in Congregational Care (jusher@ipc-usa.org or 933-3694) if you can help.

The letter below was written by IPC member Joel Hillhouse as a testimony about his service as Chairman of the Worship Committee's Funeral Ushers:

Dear IPC member,

A couple of years ago Reverend Lucy Turner asked me to do something I really didn't think I wanted to do but turned out to be one of the most meaningful experiences of my life. She asked me to serve as Chairman of the Worship Committee's Funeral Ushers. Wanting to do more for IPC and our members, I accepted but with some reluctance. Funerals aren't really one of my most favorite services to attend, but after Lucy explained how meaningful they are not only to family members but also to friends of the deceased and what personally I would gain in participating, I am now so glad I did accept. The most pleasant part of these experiences is knowing that beyond the grief is a happiness of our life hereafter for those for whom the service is held. It certainly has made dealing with grief easier for me personally. And I thought of the expression "If you can't think of a valid reason to say NO, just say YES" which is what I did.

I am writing you to ask for your consideration to join the group of volunteers who get called to participate in these services at their convenience. We have an extensive list of names, and I always try not to call the same people each time there is a need. You will be asked to come one hour before the scheduled service, give support to the attendees, pass out programs, and stay until it is over. That's it. So if you feel the call to participate, please email either me (joelhillhouse@bellsouth.net) or call me at 205-967-7045 or contact Lucy's administrative assistant, Jeannine Usher (jusher@ipc-usa.org or 205-933-3694) to submit your name and phone number(s). (Spouses are also welcome to add their names as well.) You really will be glad you did.

Most sincerely,

Joel R. Hillhouse

IPC Foundation Shaw Serves as Summer Intern

The Development Committee of the IPC Foundation has enjoyed having the help of

former active IPC elder **Mary Sellers Shaw** this summer while she was home from the University of Alabama. When she leaves IPC she'll head to Washington, D.C. to intern for Representative Spencer Bachus and then back to campus to continue her Honors Fellows Program studies. She assembled some of the many "THANK YOU'S" from foundation grant recipients and offers the following two as highlights:

"By investing in our mission, you have invested in the life of a girl. You may never meet her and she may never truly understand the difference you have made. On her behalf and on behalf of all our girls whose lives are changed daily because of the generosity of the Independent Presbyterian Church, we thank you once again." **From Girl Scouts of North-Central Alabama**

"Thank you personally for your advocacy in behalf of CityWorks - Team Nehemiah! We continue to build collaboration and together serve to chip away at this culture of defeat and deception amongst the poor. At last month's block party, two families who have lived 3 houses apart met for the first time. The isolation we confront daily is symptomatic of the epidemic of apathy. We want to see hope ignited here - thank you for helping - good news is on the way!" **From CityWorks, Fairfield**

As Mary Sellers observed the first consideration of new grant applicants for the next grant cycle, she realized the limited resources available to fund worthy programs and commented,

"Imagine the difference it would make if the Foundation had even more resources!"

Please consider including the IPC Foundation in your estate plans (or as an annual gift) in order to expand the life-changing impact of these awards.

Thank you.

*Rev. Bobbie Epting,
Associate Pastor*



Mary Sellers Shaw
photo by Paul Romjue

Facilities Assessment Task Force: New Task

Determining the best interim and long-term use of IPC's "expanding" footprint requires a focused approach and systematic process, now that the congregation has voted to purchase the First Church of Christ, Scientist next door.

Consequently, the Coordinating Committee has re-tasked the task force to work with the Strategic Planning Focus Committee and the consultants who will be brought in to complete a comprehensive master plan for IPC's properties. The task force will insure that congregational input is included in the process as well.

Bo Grisham continues to chair the task force, and members are Houston Cook, Paula Crockard, Joel Hillhouse, Jimmy Holloway, Andrew Lewis, Kathryn Miree, George Taylor and Kennon Walthall. Staff members are Dr. Conrad Sharps, Rev. Bobbie Epting and Jim Wooten.

The committee plans to begin meeting in August. Please keep their important work in your prayers.

Thank you!

Rev. Bobbie Epting
Associate Pastor



Viewing the steeple of the "church next door" through the window of the IPC Great Hall

Photo by Virginia Jones

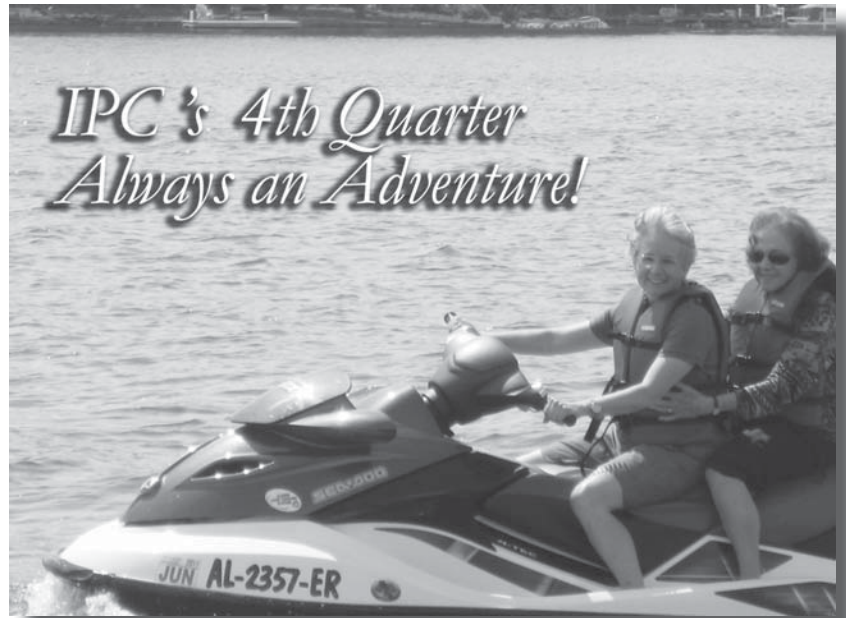
LIVING IN COMMUNITY

Always an adventure... IPC's 4th Quarter Group!

The 4th Quarter, IPC's older adult ministry (55 or older), sponsors regular activities that provide opportunities throughout the year for fun and fellowship. You may contact Cindy Shaw or Jeannine Usher in Congregational Care for details about upcoming 4th Quarter adventures!

**4th Quarter
Lunch Bunch
Tuesday, July 26
12:00 noon
26/Twenty-six
Restaurant Located
in Five Points South**

We'll just gather at the restaurant at 12:00 Noon that day and have a wonderful meal together!
For reservations, please call Jeannine Usher in Congregational Care at 933-3694.



Photos above and below in Mentone, Ala. for an autumn lunch at the mountain homes of Libby Kidd and Nancy Skinner



Photos above and left at the Lake for a picnic and boat ride at Ann & Richard Monk's Lake Martin Home

Photo below at Monroeville for a weekend getaway to see "To Kill a Mockingbird" and the quilts of Gee's Bend





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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Vacation Bible School Summer 2011

We had so much fun with our preschool children this year at Vacation Bible School!

Through story, music, crafts, and skits, the children learned messages such as:

be ready for God, give happily to God, believe fully in God, remember Jesus often, and celebrate God forever.

Each year we incorporate a mission component into the Vacation Bible School week.



This year's theme for Vacation Bible School was **Shake It Up Café**. Playing off the food theme, **each child was given a special bag** and asked to bring in a food item each day for our Food Pantry. In addition to bringing food for the week of VBS, the children were encouraged to take their special bag home so they can bring food back to the food pantry throughout the year. The idea was that they take their special bag to the grocery when they shop and place it in the cart. By doing so it serves as a reminder and they can put some food items in it to bring to church. We were excited to have the opportunity to involve our preschool children in the **Food Pantry mission** of our church in such a tangible way.

Cindy Coulter, Director, Children's Ministries

