

CONNECTIONS

Growing congregations that passionately engage their community to make disciples.



What happens at General Assembly? Who will represent New Covenant Presbyterians?



Please pray for these New Covenant Commissioners to the General Assembly.

Front row: RE Jason Reed, First, Pasadena; Rev. Jeff Smith, St. Andrew's, Houston; RE Jennifer Carr, Webster; Rev. Mary Currie, First, Navasota; RE Nell Schwartz, Southminster, Missouri City.

Back Row: Rev. Blake Brinegar, Westminster, Houston; Rev. Bob Murphy, First, Conroe; RE Gail Northern, St. Giles, Houston; RE Jim Allison, Pines, Houston; and Rev. Vicky Jones, MDPC, Houston.

*RE = Ruling Elder

our ten commissioners may have the most impact. They are equally divided between men and women, ruling elders and teaching elders, representing congregations of all sizes across Southeast Texas.

Some of the committees will deal with daily business of the assembly offices in Louisville. **Jason Reed** will be working with the very Presbyterian committee to review the work of permanent committees of the GA. **Bob Murphy** will be reviewing the work of the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Foundation, and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation. A hot topic here is the offering of insurance benefits to same sex partners. **Vicky Jones** is assigned to the Christian Education committee, which also includes our theological seminaries and other educational institutions.

Other committees will consider overtures that address issues that might seem more cultural. **Gail Northern** will be working with the committee that is considering a redefinition of marriage and also civil unions. Overtures are asking for a change in language from the definition of marriage "between

See WHAT HAPPENS on page 3

The 220th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) begins Saturday, June 30, in Pittsburgh, PA, opening with a worship and communion service (over 4000 Presbyterians, 300 choir members, old and new hymns, a jazz group, bell ringers, brass quintet, liturgical dancers, organ, piano!). Specially designed for this assembly, the communion ware used will be offered for sale later in the week, so if you want a set, email stated

clerk, Lynn Hargrove lhargrove@pbyofnewcovenant.org.

One of the first actions taken will be the election of a moderator for the assembly. Four teaching elders are standing for election. **Randy Branson** has served here in our presbytery, currently serving in Graham, Texas. **Neal Presa** is from Middlesex, NJ, and chaired the committee to review the Heidelberg Catechism. **Robert Austell** serves the Good Shepherd church in Charlotte, NC. **Susan**

Davis Krummel is the only woman candidate and serves as the executive of the Synod of Lincoln Trails. Each brings different gifts and would represent our church well. News of the election will no doubt be on Facebook, or you check www.pcusa.org.

Twenty-one committees will consider the overtures that have been submitted by presbyteries as well as reports of task forces and other entities in the church. This is where

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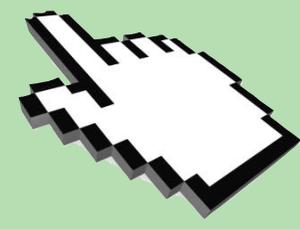
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FROM THE COLE MINE

By TE Mike Cole, General Presbyter, Presbytery of New Covenant



NEW COVENANT CONNECTIONS

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“Taking Only What We Need”

He told them: “Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt.” (Luke 6:3)

We didn’t exactly live up to Jesus’ standards, but we made it to Europe for six weeks taking only a carry-on and a backpack each. I have to admit that we felt pretty smug about our packing as we watched other tourists exhaustedly dragging their oversize luggage around the cobbled streets of Italy, France, Austria, and Germany. Every time we encountered a set of stairs (which was frequently), I was grateful that we had packed lighter.

And even with our compact packing, we took too many things. We wanted to be prepared for most eventualities, but we discovered that we can get by with far less than we think, if we try. We ended up shipping about 17 pounds of stuff back home from Italy because we packed more than we needed.

That was true not only of our packing but also of our budgeting. We determined to operate on 100 Euros per day for all expenses except housing and travel. That’s still far more than many Europeans or Americans live on each day; yet it was a challenge to stay within our budget – and we did. Again, not up to discipleship standards but better than what some had predicted.

All this “lite” traveling did not affect our enjoyment or our ability to revel in the history, architecture, art, music, food, and ambience of each area we visited. Money was a means to an end, and if our means were at an end, we found something to do that didn’t cost as much. Traveling with “less” opened us to different opportunities that we might not have had if money were not an object. It was a revelation to comprehend that

we really didn’t need all the stuff we tend to carry with us in order to live in God’s realm.

One Sunday in Lezzano on Lake Como (sounds pretty pretentious, doesn’t it?) we needed to be frugal, so we took a walk and struck up a conversation with a man who was on his way to buy homemade polenta (corn meal, cheese, and butter in copious amounts). He offered to take us to a very small restaurant – no signs or menus – you just ate what they had. There we encountered a man who was making polenta in a huge copper pot over a propane fire. The locals were lining up to purchase some of his specialty. We sat, drank wine, ate polenta, shared views on politics and economics, and had a fantastic adventure that we wouldn’t have had if we had done the typical tourist thing. Our journey depended more on relationships than on stuff.

The same can be said for our congregations and the presbytery. We have packed our buildings, programs, and budgets to prepare for any and every eventuality and in the process have lost some of our agility and ability to improvise and be flexible. We have gotten so accustomed to packing for a rainy day, a windy day, a sunny day, a cold day, a humid day, and a hot day that we have begun to think that we can’t journey with Jesus without all that stuff.

Our congregations and our presbytery are in a time of testing, but it’s not the kind of theological or political test many think – it is a test of our discipleship. How far are we willing to go with as little as possible? As long as the substance of what consumes us is “things,” we won’t go



Mike in Lezzano, Italy.

far enough for Jesus’ sake.

The present reality is that many of our congregations are experiencing budgets that are shrinking, sanctuaries that are half-full, membership that is aging, and buildings that consume more resources than congregations can afford. In some instances, buildings and “things” are holding us back from being a vital witness for Jesus Christ. In others, it is our determination to do things the way they’ve always been done that is extra baggage. We need to find ways to pack lighter and become more nimble in our discipleship. It seems to me that part of what Jesus was saying in his instructions to his disciples on their first mission trip was, “think more about people than about things and I’ll take care of the things you need.” In other words, it’s about the journey, not the baggage.

In Christ,

a man and a woman” to “between two persons.” **Jennifer Carr** will be looking at Immigration Issues. This is particularly important for states along the border with Mexico, but does not stop there. **Jim Allison** will be working with Social Justice issues, which includes overtures on racism, poverty, corporal punishment, and other imbalances of power and authority. **Jeff Smith** will be working with health issues, including how we treat people with disabilities and reproductive rights. **Blake Brinegar** will be working with issues dealing with peacemaking efforts in the Middle East. This is the committee which will be reviewing our overture about divestment from U.S. companies whose products are used to harm people in the area, as well as other human rights issues.

Mary Currie is working with Church Growth and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program. They will be working with the efforts to begin 1001 new worshipping communities across the country, as well as how we grow congregations that are more diverse. **Nell Schwartz** is excited to be working with the Confessions of the Church, including a new translation of the Heidelberg Catechism, and a reconsideration of the Belhar Confession.

Laureen Suba (St. Philip, Houston), a student at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, is the Theological Student Advisory Delegate and **Jessica Edstrom** (New Hope, Katy), a student at Fuller Theological Seminary, is the alternate Theological Student Advisory Delegate. **Jennifer Paden** (Webster PC) is the Young Adult Advisory Delegate and **Soo Jin Ko** (Young Nak, Houston) is the alternate Young Adult Advisory Delegate.

Hot topics for the assembly include the possible dissolution of synods after commissioners hear a report from the Mid Council Commission, the possibility of non-geographic presbyteries of affinity, and the nature of the church in the 21st century.

Once the committees finish their work, the whole assembly hears their reports and considers what business to send to the



David Lawrence Convention Center where GA is being held – the first “green” convention center. It stands along the Allegheny River.

presbyteries for ratification. This work takes a couple of days, with debates, discussions, motions, and amendments, as commissioners seek to perfect the wording and the working of the twenty-one committees.

The assembly concludes July 7 with worship. And then the exhausted commissioners travel home again, and watch as their work is voted on by presbyteries across the country, and begins to change the way we operate as the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

You can follow the action by streaming video at PC-biz – the link can be found on the PC(USA) home page, www.pcusa.org. Many people will be tweeting, with a hashtag of #ga2012 or some other handle. Attendees from our presbytery will be blogging. Come hear reports from our commissioners at the Post-GA called meeting of the presbytery on Sunday, July 15, 3:00-5:00 p.m. at Love PC, Jersey Village.

You can support our commissioners with prayer and with notes of encouragement. Please send notes to:

Lynn Hargrove
Presbytery of New Covenant
1110 Lovett Boulevard
Houston, TX 77006

After Thursday, June 28,
send them to:

Lynn Hargrove
c/o Omni William Penn Hotel
530 William Penn Place,
Pittsburgh, PA, 15219

Please label the note with the commissioner's name.



CLERK'S CORNER

By Rev. Lynn Hargrove, Stated Clerk, Presbytery of New Covenant

A New Day

As the reality of congregational life is changing, so is the reality of being called as pastor. Of the 100+ congregations in our presbytery, about 70 are served by called and installed pastors, whether heads of staff or solo pastors. Ten are served by stated supply pastors. Many of our congregations that worship with 50 or less cannot afford a called pastor, so they have pulpit supply or other temporary leadership.

We are seeing a shift in the possibilities for full time calls to solo pastor or head of staff for a congregation that can afford multiple pastors. People graduating from seminary are being told that they might need to be “tentmakers” – people that would have a second income-making position in order to afford being a pastor. There is an increase in the need for temporary pastoral positions. This might include an interim, a stated supply, pulpit supply, or parish associate form of leadership. You might ask, “What is the difference between these positions?”

INTERIM

An interim pastor works with a congregation to transition from one installed pastor to the next. The interim helps a congregation to process emotions around past hurts and losses and to get ready for a new long-term relationship. There might be issues that would affect the success of a new installed pastor without processing some of the emotional baggage - that is the work of a skilled interim.

There may be problems on the staff with relationships or leadership. There may be a lack of vision or energy, or a desire to live in the past and not confront the present or what might be in the future. That is also the work of a skilled interim. A skilled interim can help a congregation come to a healthy place and make the way clear for the new installed pastor to be successful in that call.

STATED SUPPLY

When I interviewed at St. Giles for the interim position, I was asked, “If we decide to close, how would you handle it?” A congregation asking that kind of question doesn't need an interim, because there might not be a next installed pastor. I sensed a call between the congregation and me, and I became their Stated Supply pastor. The congregation has done a lot of hard work toward becoming more outwardly focused (missional) as we have reached out to our neighborhood. We are growing slowly, and we sense a new purpose as we seek to follow where God is leading us. But the congregation is not in a position to call an installed pastor. That does not negate the work that we are doing together, but it does change the nature of the call. A Stated Supply is a contract position, renewable year to year, but not term limited.

PULPIT SUPPLY

Other congregations need Pulpit Supply. These are congregations that need the sacraments served by an ordained Teaching Elder (Minister of Word and Sacrament), or want a Teaching Elder in worship leadership, perhaps on an irregular basis. They might be small in size but able to handle the congregational care duties without a pastor. We have about twenty congregations that are currently being served in this sort of relationship.

PARISH ASSOCIATE

A Parish Associate can be either paid or volunteer. This person often assists with pastoral care or worship leadership. Usually this is a part-time position on an as-needed basis, and is tied to an installed pastor called to that congregation.

As congregational budgets shrink, sessions grapple with what kind of pastoral leadership they can afford.



Mary's Musings

By Mary Marcotte, Associate General Presbyter,
Presbytery of New Covenant

When Friendliness Isn't Enough

One of the special blessings of my work here in the presbytery is the opportunity to accept invitations from our congregations to address particular topics in worship, classes, or retreats. One of these recent invitations has allowed me the luxury of spending some time reflecting on the practice and mindset of hospitality. Hospitality is a critical spiritual practice that contributes to healthy faith communities. It can also be a corrective to what I call "the dark side" of the blessings of the friendly church.

Don't get me wrong – I highly value my church friendships. I want to experience friendships in and through the church. Churches where no one talks to anyone make me sad; churches where members are mean-spirited to one another make me angry. But there are a couple of shadow concerns that can emerge in "friendly" churches.

Friendly churches can be extremely hard for a newcomer to break into. Passing of the Peace that becomes an extended meet and greet of old friends can be painful for a newcomer who is virtually ignored. Coffee fellowship can bring back all the horrors of middle school lunchroom exclusions when everyone else seems to be talking and laughing with good friends and you are standing awkwardly on the edge of the room. Friendly churches can become so afraid of hurting anyone's feelings that they fail to make innovations or needed changes.

Hospitality, I'd argue, is different. Because hospitality is about making sure that the stranger is included; it's about widening the circle rather than tightening the huddle. It's about caring enough about people to dig beyond the surface, to see them as individuals, to meet them where they are. It is about removing unnecessary barriers that can make it hard to connect or even to participate.

Hospitality is a biblically-based and theologically-grounded practice. The people of Israel were reminded repeatedly of the time when they were strangers and sojourners in foreign lands. New Testament reading raises this hospitality to an even higher standard. Understood in biblical terms, hospitality is pretty counter-cultural. Perhaps a challenge to us today is to hold onto this counter-cultural understanding of being in deep relationship with those who are not like us as key to the practice, rather than the glossy welcome of entertaining and Martha Stewart. If we merely change the sign on our Welcome Centers (which probably are not that welcoming) to Hospitality Centers, we have missed the point.

I'm both impressed by and convicted by Lauren Winner's chapter on hospitality in her book *Mudhouse Sabbath*. Lauren writes that "We are not meant simply to invite people into our homes – but also to invite them into our lives. Having guests and visitors, if we do it right, is not an imposition because we are not meant to rearrange our lives for our guests. We are meant to invite our guests to enter into our lives as they are. It is this forging of relationships that transforms entertaining into hospitality."

These are important words to remember. Hospitality is about relationship. Church growth may be a byproduct, but hospitality is

continued on right...

Community News

News from Camp Cho-Yeh

Garret Larsen has been appointed to the position of Acting President and CEO of Cho-Yeh Camp and Conference Center, retaining his duties as Summer Camp Director. Garret has devoted the past five years to Cho-Yeh and its summer camp, during which time the quality of the camp offering has been significantly enhanced and attendance has risen. Please pray for Garret and his family as they move into this next phase of their ministry with Cho-Yeh.

The Board of Directors is deeply grateful to Kim and Jason Brown, who will be leaving Cho-Yeh this summer after 22 years of service. Cho-Yeh's current status as a premier Christian summer camp and retreat center is due in large part to Kim and Jason's energy, ingenuity and persistence. Pray for Kim and Jason



Garret Larsen, wife Kelly, and their two boys came to Houston after Garret received his MDiv from Princeton Theological Seminary.

as they seek to discern and respond to the Holy Spirit's direction.

Good news made real

In May, Bethel PC in West Columbia, presented many dresses members had made from pillowcases as part of the "Dress a Girl Around the World" program. Seventy dresses along with more from Spring Branch Presbyterian were taken to the border in early June for delivery by CUPS to girls across the border.

Twenty-five members from Spring Branch PC and First PC, Sugar Land also delivered 91 dresses, school supplies, and many other items as they served with the ARISE ministry and built PET vehicles (Personal Energy Transportation).



Mary's Musings continued...

not about marketing or even simply good manners. It is about a conversion beyond self-interest; it is modeling, in our own small ways, the abundant life and relationship to which our Triune God calls us.

So, in this summer season, I'd challenge each of us to look at our churches, our communities, and yes, even ourselves with fresh eyes. Where are entry points, where is welcome, and how is authentic care and concern expressed? Welcome the stranger – and I suspect we will all be changed.

E Highlights

PYCC is the place to be!



PYCC youth at Cho-Yeh.

Do you know a young person who has gifts for leadership or an adult with a mentoring spirit? Then encourage them to apply for our Presbytery's Youth Connection Council (PYCC). Our presbytery's Youth Council is a wonderful opportunity for young people to share their gifts and explore their leadership abilities. Youth on the council work alongside adult members to design and lead fellowship, mission, and worship experiences for the young people of our presbytery. Through these events, this council seeks to deepen one's faith and relationship with God as well as build relationships between youth and adults in our presbytery.

WE NEED YOU to identify young people and adults in your congregation who have gifts for ministry and leadership potential, and who will be willing to make

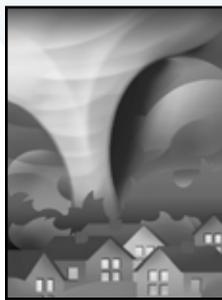
the commitment to be a member of the 2012-2013 Presbyterian Youth Connection Council (PYCC). Information and applications can be found online at: www.pbyofnewcovenant.org> Quick Find> Youth Connection.

Potential youth and adults should complete applications and submit them to their church for review and endorsement. Your church will then select and submit up to four youth (in 10th – 12th grades) and two adults (over the age of 21) to serve on the council and represent your congregation.

Thank you for empowering the youth of our presbytery to serve as leaders of Christ's Church! May God continue to guide and bless us as we seek to provide faith-filled, transformative experiences for young people!

Disaster planning materials for congregations

Plans should be in place ahead of any unforeseen disaster. Checklists and examples are posted on the home page of the presbytery website, www.pbyofnewcovenant.org. Plans have been developed for small-size, medium-size, and large-size congregations. Take a look!



Making History TODAY



By Dr. James S. Currie, Executive Secretary
Presbyterian Historical Society of the Southwest

The Presbyterian Hall of Fame

A long-time dream was fulfilled in May when I was able to visit the National Baseball Museum and Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. In addition to being the home of James Fennimore Cooper, author of *The Last of the Mohicans*, and the Baseball Hall of Fame, Cooperstown sits on the edge of Lake Otsego, which is the mouth of the Susquehanna River.

The Presbyterian church in Cooperstown is the oldest church in that quaint and beautiful village, organized on June 16, 1800. The building was built in 1805 as a gift from "Judge Cooper," the father of James Fennimore.

As I walked through the display rooms and the halls of the Hall of Fame, I was mesmerized by the stories of the great players from the 19th century up to our own day – from Abner Doubleday and Albert Spalding to Cap Anson and Cy Young to John McGraw to Cool Papa Bell and Ty Cobb to Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig and Yogi Berra to Dizzy Dean and Stan Musial to Ted Williams, Willie Mays, and Ernie Banks. What a thrill to be among the spirits of the giants of the game! Then I wondered about all those who had played the game and loved it with a passion, but who never "made it to the Hall" and whose names may never be known to baseball aficionados.

If there were a Presbyterian Hall of Fame, whom would you include? John Calvin and John Knox would be two obvious choices. Francis Makemie, Jonathan Edwards, and John Witherspoon would surely be included. Sheldon Jackson, Henry van Dyke, Henry Sloan Coffin, Karl Barth, Robert Speer, and John Mackay would probably be seen in the pantheon of Presbyterians. And what about Rachel Henderlite and Sara Little and Marj Carpenter?

Each of us could add our own to this list of saints, either those we have known of in our own region of the country or perhaps whom we have known personally.

Part of the glory of the Reformed tradition is that at the foot of the cross we are all equal. While some persons may become better known than others, each of us is no more or no less a child of God than anyone else. Each of us has a contribution to make to the kingdom. We don't have to do something great to be considered a saint. As God's forgiven and accepted sinners, we are saints when we try to live as God's faithful people day-in and day-out.

As we make history today, may we do so with a keen sense of gratitude for all those saints, both those known and those unknown, who have helped shape who we are – as individuals and as a church.

Extra funds for mission and ministry! View details and apply for these funds

The Synod of the Sun recently reviewed all synod funds available for mission grants and scholarships. These have been organized into a new, user-friendly format in order to make it easier to apply and receive financial support for mission and education purposes.

Endowments and restricted funds are available for Mission Projects by congregations, presbyteries, institutions in covenant relationship with the synod, and other synod-related organizations:

- New church development and new worshipping communities
- Church revitalization for existing congregations
- Racial ethnic ministry initiatives
- Cross cultural internships for seminarians in churches of a different race or culture than their own
- Presbytery sponsored projects
- Youth Triennium expenses
- Campus ministry
- Self-Development of People type projects
- Emergency and disaster assistance
- Peacemaking projects
- Older adult ministry
- Financial support for children's homes
- Retreats for campus ministry chaplains
- New mission projects

Endowments and restricted funds are available for Scholarships to individuals seeking to further their education or to attend continuing education events:

- Seminary tuition and expenses
- Hispanic Latino students preparing for ministry
- Church-related continuing education for Hispanic Latino pastors and lay leaders
- Scholarships for the Multicultural Youth Conference at MoRanch
- Volunteers in Mission
- Scholarships for the Small Church Pastor Retreat at MoRanch
- Educational programs
- Doctor of Ministry program at Austin Seminary for rural church pastors
- Interim pastor training
- College and career training for orphans

To view details and apply for these funds, visit www.synodsun.com and click on "Grants and Scholarships." Links to this information are also available on the presbytery's website, www.pbyofnewcovenant.org >Forms.

Mission &



'You are all very special to us'

The presbytery approved the enrollment of four new Candidates at its June meeting. This phase provides individuals a time for full preparation to serve the church as Teaching Elders. Each spoke briefly at the meeting about his/her faith journeys and God's call.

Brian Long, a member of Atascocita Presbyterian, said he did not grow up in the church. "But I know now that Christ has always with me." He credits his experience on mission trips for teaching him about sharing his faith and the joy he knows in Jesus Christ. "Now I'm listening to Christ." Brian has been approved by COM for a CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) program.

Andrew Keyes, a member of Westminster, Houston, came to Christ at a young age because of his family and church. His college years strengthened his faith, but it was through meaningful relationships

at Camp Cho-Yeh that God's call became a reality. His internship at Westlake Presbyterian in Austin brought him obedience to Christ.

Becky Provence a member of MDPC, Houston, is in her third year at Fuller Seminary in California. Although she was born to parents who were both pastors, it was during her years in youth ministry at MDPC that she realized that God was calling her to more study.

Victor Harris, a member of St. Andrew's, Houston, says that God's call was rather inconvenient. He already knew how his life was going to be. He was in the business world when God interrupted him. "God kept nagging me," Victor said. He talked things over with his pastor at St. Andrew's, Houston, TE Jeff Smith, who told him that he had been in ministry all of his life. That thought freed him from the fear that was keeping him "in the boat."

Presbyterian Pan American School's celebrates!

Emotions ran high as Presbyterian Pan American School (a college preparatory school) marked its commencement and the changing of the guard in the president's office in May, climaxing the 100th anniversary celebrations of the school. Newly elected president, Robert L. "Doug" Dalglish joins the

international secondary school after serving as pastor of the Canyon Lake Presbyterian Church. He brings extensive experience working with youth and providing camp and conference committee leadership in Mission Presbytery.

Outgoing president James Matthews arrived at Pan Am in 1997.

Looking back, he reflects how it was a bit strange to ask an Irish scholar and university administrator to head a prep school for Hispanic kids. Enrollment was low, facilities were in disrepair, and staff morale was deflated. But something clicked. His charge from the board was clear: save it or close it. The school had no debt; what it needed was more students, so Matthews hit the road to promote the school in Texas, Mexico and other Latin American countries, and even in

Asia and Africa.

Matthews' efforts bore fruit, and today in the school's hundredth year, Pan American boasts record enrollments, mostly from Latin America, but also including fourteen Africans and twenty Asians. A completely renovated campus with new construction currently underway, a vigorous and highly competent staff, and a firm financial basis all provide a strong foundation for the Dalglish years that lie ahead.

Ministry

CEDEPCA's New Knitting Ministry

CEDEPCA, (Central American Evangelical Center for Pastoral Studies) is an international nonprofit which offers educational programs that allow people to improve their lives and change their communities. Centered in Guatemala City, CEDEPCA offers programs throughout Central America. As part of their mission to support women, CEDEPCA has begun a new project, Prayer Shawls for Healing, which has been a wonderful experience for many women. Volunteers are encouraged and challenged to knit and pray for a particular person who is going through a difficult time. Recipients are happy to know that others were praying for them while they were knitting the shawls and scarves.

The CEDEPCA team worked enthusiastically and planned a special service to go with the delivery of prayer shawls and scarves. The knitters found that the delivery was unexpectedly very emotional. Testimonies from the recipients of



Knitting with love.

these gifts expressed their joy and thanksgiving for the friendships that had developed and the wonderful blessings they received from the prayers.

CEDEPCA would like to continue this project and is seeking support for this project that blesses both women and men. CEDEPCA is working on ways to find possible yarn donors. Keep CEDEPCA in your prayers as they work in this new ministry. For more information, contact Sharyl Davis at sharyl@northwoods.org.

New Covenant grants for 2012-2013

General Council is pleased to announce approved of applications for the following grants:

Recipients of Vision Initiative Grants, totaling \$19,019

- ChristChurch Presbyterian, Bellaire - electric sign
- First Presbyterian, Galveston - advertising and promotion
- First Presbyterian, Wharton - young adult Bible study
- St. Philip Presbyterian, Houston - Kids Against Hunger packets
- St. Stephen Presbyterian, Houston - divorce care outreach
- St. Thomas Presbyterian, Houston - web page, social media blitz, advertising, and community events
- Woodforest Presbyterian, Houston - family ministry staff (half-time)

Johnson Social Justice Grants, totaling \$8,583

- First Presbyterian, Pasadena - bullying program
- John Knox Presbyterian, Houston - arts and crafts bazaar
- St. Philip Presbyterian, Houston - Kids Against Hunger support
- United Campus Ministry, Aggieland - speakers
- New Covenant's Outreach Committee - human trafficking, Cobble Palm

Many thanks to the Vision Initiative and Lynn Johnson Social Justice Committee members for their generous service in reviewing the grant applications!

Classifieds

"...The Lord bids each one of us in all life's actions to look to his calling...It is enough if we know that the Lord's calling is in everything the beginning and foundation of well-doing."
(Calvin. Institutes. 3.10.6)

Job Opening: Director of Youth Ministry

Southminster PC, Missouri City, is seeking a Director of Youth Ministry. The person filling this fulltime position will develop and implement a thriving and dynamic youth ministry program at the church for youth in grades 6 through 12. The Director will plan, coordinate, and implement a year-round program that incorporates fellowship, worship, spiritual development, community and church service, and Christian Education. For a complete job description, visit www.pbyofnewcovenant.org and click on Church Jobs > Other Church Professionals. If interested, email Rev. Kent Landry, klandry@southminpres.org, or call him at 281-745-4794.

Help wanted!

The Presbyterian Historical Society of the Southwest is looking for someone to help in two ways: (1) develop a website, and (2) produce a brief video about the work of the Society. If you know of someone who would be interested in helping with either or both of these projects, please contact Dr. Jim Currie at pastor@pfcpsadena.org or 281-991-8700.

Job Opening: Job opening: part-time Office Manager

Peace Presbyterian, Pearland, <http://www.peacepres.net/welcome> is seeking a part-time Office Manager to run the daily operations and administrative duties of a busy office. The person filling this position must have excellent computer skills and the ability to work in a variety of programs, including Microsoft Word, Excel, Publisher, and an eye for graphic layout for our weekly bulletins and monthly newsletters. Knowledge and ability to do website updates are desired, but some training will be provided.

The position will require working with the Pastor to provide administrative and secretarial services as well as interfacing and completing tasks for many members of the church leadership and congregation. Applicant must have exceptional people skills, follow-through, organization and attention to detail as well as the ability to multitask. Maintaining church records and data entry are also a part of daily activities. If interested, send your cover letter and resume to Office_manager@peacepres.net

Remember...

Church jobs openings are listed at www.pbyofnewcovenant.org. Church Jobs > Pastors, Educators, Other Church Professionals, and Support Staff.

2012 Connections copy deadlines

Wednesday, August 1

September/October issue
Note earlier date for August

Wednesday, October 10

November/December issue

Wednesday, December 5

January/February issue

Please send articles and photos to Helen Wolf at hwolf@pbyofnewcovenant.org.

2012 Presbytery Meetings!

Sunday, July 15, 2012

Love Presbyterian
(formerly United Korean),

Jersey Village
Post-G.A. meeting

Saturday, October 20, 2012

Webster Presbyterian, Webster

Useful Resource Information

Why INVEST in curriculum?

While it can certainly be exciting to write curriculum if there are volunteers with time and passion and expertise, for most folks depending on a volunteer base, curriculum is a good investment. Here are “seven curriculum blessings” suggested by Don Griggs (Adapted from APCE Advocate, Winter 2011)

- 1. Teachers need to be nurtured in their own faith development.** The best learners in the church are the teachers. A commitment to teach or lead a class or small group is an opportunity to grow in understanding of the Bible and faithful commitment to Jesus Christ. Curriculum can be a helpful resource for nurturing a teacher’s spiritual life by including prayers, sidebars with focused quotes, and questions to prompt the teacher to think, reflect, and pray.
- 2. Teachers and leaders need support in developing relationships within their classes and groups.** The most important thing that happens in a classroom or small group setting is the building of relationships between the teacher/leader and the participants, among the participants themselves, with the life and mission of the congregation, and most especially with Jesus through the presence of the Holy Spirit. Curriculum can be most helpful when it addresses this matter more explicitly by offering ways to build and gird relationships.
- 3. Teachers need help to understand the context of the Bible passage of the lesson.** Curriculum is a helpful tool when it includes a section of background information dealing with the context in which the passage appears, providing clues to understanding key words and concepts, and making connections to other passages. This will increase the teacher/leader’s understanding and the ability to communicate that understanding to the participants.
- 4. Teachers need options for developing their lesson plans. No two classes or groups are alike.** Every teacher/leader has unique abilities, interests, and experiences. Given this reality, curriculum is a helpful tool when it offers alternate strategies for developing a lesson and when it encourages teachers/leaders to utilize their own gifts, resources and experiences. When a curriculum offers just one way to present or share a Bible passage, it presents difficulties for those who don’t have the space, number of participants, the amount of time, or the resources assumed by the curriculum writer.
- 5. Teachers need direction for how to involve the participants in reading, telling, exploring and reflecting on Bible passages so that they can grow in their biblical literacy.** There are at least four aspects of biblical literacy:
 - a) Reading, reflecting, and remembering what I have read in the Bible
 - b) Making connections between what I have read in one Bible passage and what I remember from reading other Bible passages.
 - c) Seeing the relevance of what I read in the Bible to what I am reading and hearing about what is happening in the world in which I live.
 - d) Applying what I learn from the Bible to my personal faith and life journey in terms of the decisions I make and the way I relate to others.Curriculum is most helpful when it provides activities for teachers/leaders to use to assist participants to grow in their biblical literacy.
- 6. Teachers need to be provided with thoughtful questions to use with their groups.** The questions teachers ask to guide discussion, interaction, and exploration of Scripture may be the most important resources for effective teaching and learning. Curriculum is most helpful when it provides a variety of questions which lead the participants through the four areas of biblical literacy, stated above.
- 7. Curriculum may take many forms in today’s technologically sophisticated world.**

Websites You Should Know – Christian Education



www.thethoughtfulchristian.com – This is a portal for downloadable study resources for adults and youth AND a virtual store for deeply-discounted books and PC(USA) curriculum. Shipping is free with orders over \$25.

www.thewiredword.com – The materials, delivered to your mailbox each Thursday include a teacher version and a student version of the study which place events from the news in conversation with scripture. There is a brief summary of the news item, some big philosophical questions, and then six passages from the old and new testaments which the group is encouraged to put into conversation. Visit the site to download a sample lesson.

www.pcusa.org/webelieve – Curriculum for children, tweens, and youth.

www.pcusa.org/faithquestions – These 4-6 week mini-courses are designed for use with high school students and begin with real questions kids ask. Suggestions for movie, music, and media to support learning are offered. A coffee house version of each lesson is available free of charge to those who purchase the teacher’s guide. The coffee house version offers one-page guidance for discussion without a variety of learning activities and is ideal for offsite gatherings. Over 25 studies are available.

www.pcusa.org/beingreformed – Details of available titles in the Being Reformed series for adults. Participant’s guides and teacher helps unpack the texts, connect with the learner’s spiritual life, and seek implications for action. More than 20 studies are currently available and more are coming. Topics include theology, Bible studies, spiritual practices, and hot topics. Each study is designed to take six weeks.

www.informedteens.org – This PC(USA) related site provides downloadable resources for adolescent development resources. Topics include parent-teen communication, practicing faith on the athletic field, body image and eating disorders, peer pressure, honesty and truth telling, alcohol and substance abuse, and a Reformed understanding of human sexuality. Lesson plans are \$5 each; free downloadable articles are also available.

www.feastingcurriculum.com – This outstanding lectionary-based curriculum draws scholarship from the award winning Feasting on the Word commentary series. Age level resources are available for children (K-2), children (Grade 3-4), Tweens (grade 5-6), multiage (K-6), youth, young adult, and adult. All materials are downloadable, making this a highly affordable option.

www.wearesparkhouse.org – This curriculum produced by Augsburg Fortress creates fun, engaging videos, and learning units that support them. This year they are launching HolyMoly for children and CONNECT for tweens. See also the SPARK Bible story book and the SPARK NRSV which would be a great 3rd grade Bible choice. Under Youth, their Traditions piece for Presbyterians is an excellent piece for both confirmation classes and new member classes. The Resource Center has purchased copies of several of the youth resources which may be checked out.

www.vibrantfaith.org – This site is a treasure trove of excellent resources and free articles relating to children, youth, and family. There are particularly strong resources here for those who wish to equip families to nurture the faith lives of their children and grandchildren

www.faithformation2020.net – A site where you will find free, helpful resources, as well as helpful ways of thinking about how we go about faith formation in a changed reality. Wonderfully helpful articles on planning for learning strategies for family, intergenerational, millennials, baby boomers, celebrating milestones, Christian practices, service, mission, and spiritual seekers.

www.faihaliveresources.org – This is the site for curriculum resources from the Reformed Church of America. Age specific, intergeneration, and topical studies are available.

Transitions

Meet New Covenant's newest pastors

The **Rev. John Wurster** has been called and installed as pastor at St. Philip, Houston. He transferred from Mission Presbytery where he was chair of the Committee on Ministry while he was serving as pastor at First Presbyterian, Kerrville. He received his DMin from Austin Theological Seminary, MDiv from Princeton Theological Seminary, and BA (Religion/Pre-Med) from Trinity University in San Antonio. He has authored two books, *What If What They Say Is True?* and *Ordinary Words, Extraordinary Deeds*.



John Wurster

John's wife Deb Burke, has been an English professor at Rutgers University, Ohio State University, and Shreiner University.

The **Rev. Linda Herron**, ordained in 2006, has transferred from Grace Presbytery. She received her DMin from Austin Theological Seminary, J.D. from the University of Houston Law Center, MA from Rice University, and BA from University of Houston. She is serving as Parish Associate at St. John's Presbyterian, Houston. Linda and her husband Dan have three grown daughters and eight grandchildren.

The **Rev. Timothy Marquez** has been called to serve as Stated Supply at First Presbyterian, Sealy. He was ordained in 1999 and is a member of the United Church of Christ South Central Conference. Timothy was educated at Silliman University Divinity School, Trinity College of Quezon City, and the Far East Bible Institute and Seminary – each located in the Philippines.



Timothy Marquez

The **Rev. Kevin S. Keaton** is serving as Regional Representative of the Board of Pensions of the PC(USA). He has returned to New Covenant, transferring from Presbytery of Missouri River Valley (Nebraska) where he served as Executive Presbyter. Kevin received his MDiv from Austin Theological Seminary and his BA from McNeese State University in Lake Charles.



Kevin Keaton

The **Rev. James "Sam" Knight** is serving as Interim Pastor at Grace, Houston. Born and raised in Wales, Sam received his formal education at Regent's Park College at Oxford University, Pontypool College, and Jones' West Monmouth School. Sam, son of a Baptist minister, was drawn to the U.S. by a group called "The Singing Men of Texas" which worked in partnership with his father's church. He moved to First PC, Orange in 1997 to work as the director of Christian Education and Youth and later served at pastor there. In 2006 Sam was called to First Presbyterian of Orlando.



Sam Knight

Sam played rugby while at Oxford and coached rugby at Lamar University in Beaumont. He is an avid reader, loves running, and plays bass and acoustic guitar. Sam and his wife Jennifer have three children ages 7, 10, and 12.

The **Rev. Andrew Adair** is Executive Director of The Antioch Partners, a missionary sending agency based in Houston which partners with local Presbyterian churches in the U.S. Those serving through The Antioch Partners (TAP) have been called by God to long-term, cross-cultural ministry and are engaged in many aspects of Kingdom work. Andrew is passionate about cross-cultural engagement and mobilizing others to participate in God's mission in the world. He and his family served as Mission Co-workers in Central Asia for nine years.

Andrew received his MDiv from Fuller Theological Seminary (Pasadena campus) with a concentration in Cross-cultural Studies. His BA is from Vanderbilt University. He loves spending time in the mountains – hiking, backpacking, fishing, and mountain biking. He and his wife Teri have three children ages 10, 15, and 18.



Andrew Adair

The **Rev. Robert Rush** is serving First Presbyterian, Tomball as Stated Supply for one year. Robert is the stated clerk of Trinity Presbytery, Cumberland Presbyterian Church and will soon know if he was elected moderator of its GA. He received a BDiv degree from Cumberland Presbyterian Theological Seminary (now Memphis Theological Seminary) and a DMin from McCormick Seminary. Might his move to Tomball be influenced by his grandchildren who live there!



Robert Rush

Honorably retired - Godspeed!

The **Rev. Patricia Clark**, St. Stephen's, Houston, received the status of Honorably Retired at the June presbytery meeting, effective July 1, 2012. After first receiving a colorful butterfly balloon and hug from her daughter. Mike Cole presented Patricia gifts from the presbytery in acknowledgement with gratitude for her faithful service to Christ's church.

Patricia's husband Forrest stood beside her during her Service of Retirement, just as he has throughout Patricia's faith journey. They joined St. Andrew's and is was there, says Patricia, "that instead of searching for God, I began to grow in faith." She enrolled in Houston's Quaker seminary, the Houston Graduate School of Theology, and transferred to Austin Seminary after a call to ministry. She has served eight churches and was a pioneer in the days when there were few women in the pulpit. Patricia plans to spend time at her farm in Shiner and looks forward to others joining her on the porch (or in the hot tub).



Rev. Pat Clark

A lifelong Presbyterian, the **Rev. Richard Kleiman** was educated in Texas and has served numerous churches in New Covenant and Grace presbyteries: Dallas, Stephenville. Navasota, and Baytown at the time of the merger of First and Westminster churches and the name change to Faith Presbyterian, Baytown. His MDiv was granted by Southwestern Seminary, and DMin from Austin Seminary. Over the years, Richard has been active on a number of presbytery and synod committees and has somehow found time to be active beyond the church in numerous nonprofit organizations. His retirement becomes effective January 1, 2013

Richard is an avid reader, guitarist, published composer, student of world religions, and instructor in centering prayer and meditation. He's been known to enjoy a round of golf, too! He and his wife Elsa have five children and eight grandchildren.

The **Rev. Mark L. Cooper** was granted Honorably Retired status and the June presbytery meeting, effective June 1, 2012. He is a native of Sandusky, Ohio. Mark received a BA from Olivet Nazarene University, his MDiv from Princeton Theological Seminary, and DMin from the Graduate Foundation. Mark has served churches in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, and Texas.

Also receiving Honorably Retired status at the June presbytery meeting is the **Rev. Lonnie DuVall**, effective May 1, 2012. Lonnie is living in South Carolina.

June 30-July 7

220th General Assembly
Pittsburgh, PA

July 4

Presbytery Offices Closed
Fourth of July

July 15

Post-GA meeting and Session
Records Review
Love PC (formerly United
Korean)
Jersey Village (Houston)

July 21

Session Records Review and
Church Treasurers Workshop
First PC
Sugar Land

July 31-August 2

Weekday Ministries
Conference
MDPC
Houston

September 3

Presbytery Offices Closed
Labor Day

September 13-15

Administrative Personnel
Association (APA)
Conference – National &
Southwest Region
San Antonio

October 6

Focus 2012
Pines PC
Houston

October 20

Stated Meeting of the
Presbytery
Session Records Review
Church Treasurers Workshop
Webster PC

October 26-28

Marriage Encounter

November 8

New Ministers Orientation
Presbytery Center

November 22-23

Presbytery Offices Closed
Thanksgiving

AUGUST 2012



Presbyterian Women of New Covenant Presbytery

An overview of 2012-2013 Horizons Bible
Study: *Dispatches to God's Household: The
General Epistles* by Nancy Benson-Nicol

The six books of the New Testament explored in this study are 1 and 2 Peter, 1-3 John, and Jude. They teach us what it means to live in community, what it means to belong to the household of God. Sessions in this August Bible study training are free. Mary Marcotte will teach all sessions except in Beaumont, which will be taught by Linda Purves.

- ♦ **Friday, August 10 at Atascocita PC**
9:15 a.m.–1:00 p.m. including lunch
Register at church office at 281-852-8990 or apc@apchumble.org
- ♦ **Thursday, August 16 at Webster PC**
9:15 a.m.–12 noon
Register at church office at 281-332-1251 or
office@websterpresby.org
- ♦ **Friday, August 17 at St. Philip PC, Houston**
9:15 a.m.–12 noon
Register at church office at 713-622-4807 or l.taylor46@yahoo.com
- ♦ **Saturday, August 18 at First PC, Lufkin**
9:30 a.m.–2:00 p.m. including lunch, afternoon sharing
and worship.
Register with Rev. Sue Hyde at 936-967-2531 or
suehyde617@msn.com
- ♦ **Friday, August 24 at First PC, Lake Jackson**
9:15 a.m.–12 noon. Register at church office at
979-297-3049 or fpc-lj@sbcglobal.net
- ♦ **Saturday, August 25 at First PC, Bryan**
9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. including lunch (donations for lunch
accepted).
Register with Janice Bradshaw at 979-777-5475 or
janicebradshaw@suddenlink.net
- ♦ **Saturday, August 25 at St. Andrew's PC, Beaumont**
9:15 a.m.–12 noon
Register with church office at 409-892-8611 or billies@saintandy.org

Individual copies or group orders from your church for "Dispatches to God's Household: The General Epistles" by Nancy Benson-Nicol may be made by calling the Presbyterian Distribution Service at 1-800-524-2612.

JULY 30 - AUGUST 2



Preparing for Medical Care Options: Advance Care Planning

There was a time when many of us just did what our doctor suggested. Now, doctors are asking us what we want them to do and when! Being prepared ahead of time by knowing what our values are, how far we want medicine to go, if or when to stop life-saving interventions, and discussing this with our closest family members are vital, spiritual dimensions of this process. Sadly, many of us are at the decision-making point before we realize what is happening!

This is an area where teaching and ruling elders can serve a critical function in spiritual care. These conversations about medical choices are going to happen with or without us. Too often spiritual caregivers enter the conversation after the decisions are already made. How much deeper our ministries can be if we have been involved along the way!

This workshop will be held at the Presbytery Center on Thursday, August 2, from 9:00 a.m. to noon. It will be taught by POP Executive Director, Dr. Steve Spidell, BCC. There is no charge to attend. Presbyterian Outreach to Patients is providing this educational event in gratitude for the support of congregations and individuals of the Presbytery.

Registration is requested by emailing
stevespidell@popministry.org.

more events and gatherings to enjoy!

AUGUST 6-10

SUPER PLACE CAMP at MDPC For Children and Young Adults with Special Needs

Super Place Camp for children and young adults with special needs will be held August 6-10, 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Memorial Drive, Houston. During the week, "Amazing Desert Journey" will provide activities that include small group time for play, games, and conversation; a daily Bible story; music, recreation, snacks, and more! Every camper will have a teen or adult buddy, and a nurse will be on duty each day.



Please register by Monday, July 23. Contact Karen Lopes: klopes@mdpc.org or 713-490-9265. Online registration at www.mdpc.org > Children Ministries > Special Events. Cost: \$70 per camper. Scholarships are available.

Sponsored by: Memorial Drive Presbyterian, Tallowood Baptist, Memorial Drive United Methodist, First United Methodist Westchase, Chapelwood United Methodist, and Houston First Baptist.

OCTOBER 27

BE PART OF THE **CELEBRATION**

This year, Interface-Samaritan Counseling Centers celebrates its 40th anniversary of providing critical counseling and educational services to the Houston community. Forty years of service to the community is a notable accomplishment, and you are invited to join the celebration at the annual Seasons of Caring event!



The dinner and auction event, to be held in the place of the annual luncheon, will take place on Saturday, October 27, 6:30–9:30 p.m. at River Oaks Country Club. This is the one fundraising event of the year. Four exceptional Presbyterians will be honored by the presentation of the "Samaritan for All Seasons" award: Dr. Julie Boom and Dr. Marc Boom (First Presbyterian Church, Houston) and Cindy and Bob Holloway (Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church, Houston).

The Samaritan for All Seasons award recognizes and honors individuals whose personal and professional lives epitomize compassion for others. The extraordinary individuals honored this year demonstrate a strong sense of community and civic responsibility and are shining examples of what it is to be a Good Samaritan: always generous of spirit to those most in need.

Two Presbyterian couples who were instrumental in the founding of Interface-Samaritan will also be recognized for their efforts in bringing Interface's services to the Houston community: Missie and Sam Lanham, former pastor of St. Philip Presbyterian Church, and Rita and John Hannah.

Chaired by MDPC's Sharon and Curt Webb, this is an event you don't want to miss! Proceeds from the event enable Interface to provide counseling and educational services from a Christian perspective. Funds received that evening help support Interface's outreach efforts to communities that do not have access to quality mental health services. For more information on how to purchase a ticket or make a donation in one of the honoree's names, please call or email Ana Schick at 713-626-7990, ext. 104, or aschick@interface-samaritan.com. Donation forms can also be found on the website at www.interface-samaritan.org.

SAVE THE DATE!

EDUCATION BEYOND THE WALLS

SEPTEMBER 15

Caregiving: Pastoral Conversation and Spiritual Assessment



SEPTEMBER 28-29

Texas Festival of Young Preachers

OCTOBER 10

The Beautiful House: Rethinking Beauty in Worship and Preaching

OCTOBER 15-17

Faith Formation for the 21st Century, co-sponsored by SCRAPCE

These events will be held on the Austin Seminary campus. Visit Beyond the Walls - Workshops and Lectures (www.austinseminary.edu) for more information and to register.

OCTOBER 11

Houston Partner Lunch

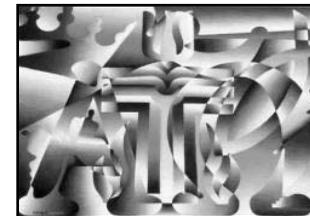
Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary
October 11, 2012



For information, contact Rev. Kristy Forbes Vits, 713-582-4112 or kvits@austinseminary.edu. Time and place TBA.

SEPTEMBER 28-30

Dancing with God



Come join in "Dancing with God!" at the 2012 Synod of the Sun Hispanic Latino Ministries Council Women's Conference. It will be held September 28-30 at Mo-Ranch in Hunt, TX. Early registration deadline is Friday, August 24 - \$130 per person; after August 24 - \$150. For more information contact Estela Sifuentes 210-273-0984 or Esperanza Guajardo 210-922-2465.

In Our Prayers

Rev. Wayne Eberly, Pines PC, Houston – Wayne’s mother died May 5, 2012 in California.

Ruling Elder Ann Earnest, Development Officer for the Presbyterian Foundation – continuing battle with cancer. Ann is a member of Grace PC, Houston.

Candidate Brandon Gaide (Next Generation Minister at Memorial Drive PC, Houston) and wife Kelly – their daughter Charlotte “Charlie” Grace Gaide was born May 10, 2012.

Rev. Sharon Gazaway, First PC, Jasper – Sharon’s sister Velma died May 25, 2012.

The Pan American School in Kingsville – the school is marking its 100th anniversary this year!

Rev. Paul Hoang and wife Thao, Young Nak PC, Houston – their son Aaron Hannam Hoang was born June 4, 2012.

Congratulations to Rachel Sahn, Director of Children’s Ministries, First PC, Bryan, and Blayne Cochran on their recent marriage.

Congratulations to Marshall Goforth (Youth Director at Southminster PC, Missouri City) and Sarah Wagner on their recent marriage.

Rev. David Green, First Presbyterian, Galveston – health concerns for his son Matthew.

Rev. Carol Tompkins, Member at large – continuing health concerns.

**HR = Honorably Retired*



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