

Day filled with celebration and fellowship

On a Saturday whose weather surprised even the professional forecasters, 201 commissioners gathered at First Presbyterian, Galveston, to hear committee reports and recommendations, greet old and new friends, learn about new ministry initiatives, and vote on the business before the Presbytery of New Covenant.

Rev. Bob Murphy welcomed the assembly to the historical church. One visitor Bob mentioned that the church did not welcome was Hurricane Ike, which in 2008 dumped water “up to your nose” in the sanctuary. Commissioners now were surrounded by the beauty of restored Tiffany windows, hand-carved communion table and pulpit, and the original colors of the sanctuary. Bob thanked former pastor David Green and the Restoration Committee for their diligence in restoring the church to its original state. “The congregation has been faithful and resilient throughout this process,” Bob said.



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The 1001 New Worshipping Communities initiative

Rev. Wayne Eberly (Pines PC, Houston) invited all congregations to take seriously the call from GA to form 1001 new worshipping communities in the next 10 years – to move forward on what may seem like an impossible call.

The 1001 Worshipping Communities initiative calls us to find new ways to create communities of faith outside our standard models of church planting. It calls us to loosen our grip on rules, to be permission-giving, and to show mutual care in life-sharing communities. The goal is not about institutional survival but about bringing us back to the core of what the church is called to be and do.

Commissioners and visitors were asked to set their watches, phones, and PDAs to ring at 10:02 to remind them to lift their voices to God and ask that He raise up harvesters. As churches work to discern God’s will and engage in the 1001 Worshipping Communities challenge, we can undergird their efforts with prayers.

The presbytery structure has taken a first step by intentionally coordinating the work of the New Church Development and the Evangelism and Renewal committees. Jackie Hannan, member of E&R Committee, told



how praying Luke 10:2 (*Pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest field.*) each day at 10:02 a.m. has taken her “from the

ordinary of my day.” It’s a step in prayer and discernment, said Jackie. Each person present was given a green bracelet, imprinted with the verse as a reminder to pray every day.

Informational gatherings will be held in June, July, and August to continue helping our presbytery share in the denomination’s big vision of planting 1001 New Worshipping Communities in the next ten years.

All are invited to attend the first gathering **Wed., June 26, 11:30 a.m.** at Pines PC, Houston. Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP to Cindy at cindy@pinespc.org or call 713-467-2234.

Part of the presentation was the viewing of a video called “Sweaty Sheep,” an illustration of just what is meant by “a worshipping community.” View it at <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/sheep/>.

Handouts were distributed that furthered defined 1001 Worshipping Communities and a response sheet, to be returned to TE Wayne Eberly, for congregations interested in learning more or who are already working with such a community.

Motions passed to dismiss First Presbyterian Church of Kingwood

After voting unanimously on a motion validating that First, Kingwood, had fulfilled the requirements for dismissal according to the Reconciliation and Dismissal Procedures of the Presbytery of New Covenant, commissioners unanimously passed a second motion to dismiss the church to the Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians, pending completion of the transfer to that body. There was no discussion of either motion prior to voting.

Members of First Kingwood gathered in the center aisle of the church, while the whole assembly surrounded them for prayer. With heads bowed and hands touching shoulders, Moderator Rev. Casey Jones expressed the very real sadness many are feeling at this time, but affirmed our belief that there is “one Lord, one faith, one baptism,” and “one holy catholic and apostolic church.” He prayed that both First Kingwood and the presbytery might continue as members of Christ’s church to work together in Peru, and support other mutual ministries such as Presbyterian Pilgrimage and the Arab American Fellowship. Casey also prayed for the Kingwood minority and for their success in starting a new PC(USA) congregation.



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Morning prayers and offering

Members of the Music Chas of Presbyterian Pilgrimage began the morning with praise songs and Morning Prayers were offered by Kelly Campbell.

Aliamma and George Jacob, PC (USA) Co-Workers, gave a Minute for Mission about



their work in South Sudan. Their upbeat message: the church is growing day by day in South Sudan!

The morning offering (\$3,087.74) will go toward the purchase of a generator for the school where the Georges will live when they return to South Sudan for another 3 years of service.

The Georges are on a 6-month break and will be in the Houston area until October.

Four moved to Candidacy phase of preparation

After sharing their faith journeys, four individuals entered the candidacy phase in their preparation to become Teaching Elders. Each told how God and people in their lives brought them to a life of faith.

“I lived in Indonesia when I was a teenager and often felt abandoned,” said **Brandon Gaide** (Memorial Drive PC, Houston). “Two individuals came into my life. I felt God grabbed hold of me.” Brandon will do Clinical Pastoral Education with Rev. Steve Spidell as part of his preparation for full time ministry.



Brandon Gaide

Sabrina Hegert (Grace PC, Houston) credits a neighbor who lived across the street from her as a

great influence in knowing God’s forgiving and divine love. Her internship at First PC, Pearland, and her service as Coordinator for Mission and Evangelism at Grace PC, Houston, have guided and encouraged her for the journey.



Sabrina Hegert

Laureen Suba (St. Philip PC, Houston) spoke about how God’s love and Christ’s message of redemption give clarity to her life. “Christ has claimed me,” said Laureen. She serves on the Board of the



Laureen Suba

Presbyterian Foundation. At this time, Laureen feels a call to worship/ preaching.

Joshua Silva-Noah (Heritage PC, Houston) told how he walked away from God as a young person – felt that religion was nothing more than fire insurance. “But God did not walk away from me,” Joshua declared. “Instead, I found grace and forgiveness; God makes all things new.”



Joshua Silva-Noah

The candidates were charged by the Rev. Laura Grice to remember, as they travel through the preparation process, to take time always to breathe, to laugh, and to wrap them themselves in prayer.

Three Candidates complete examination process

After preaching sermons to the presbytery and answering questions, three candidates completed their ordination exams and were enrolled as Ministers of Word and Sacrament.



Rev. **Nathan Carlin** has been called to serve as a chaplain for United Campus Ministry of Greater Houston in the McGovern Center for Humanities and Ethics at the UT

Texas Health Science Center in Houston, where he directs the Medical Humanities and Ethics Certificate Program for medical students.

Nathan received his MDiv from Princeton Theological Seminary with a focus on Pastoral Theology in 2005 and later “found his way to Texas” where he received MA and PhD degrees in Religious Studies from Rice University in 2009 and 2010.

Rev. Andrew Keyes also completed his ordination exams by preaching before the presbytery. He has been called to serve as Designated Associate Pastor at Southminster PC, Missouri City. Andrew received a BS degree from Texas A&M in 2010. He received his



Andrew Keyes

MDiv from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary this year. Andrew will be ordained in Mission Presbytery June 30 on our behalf.

Andrew represented Westminster PC, Houston, as a youth representative on New Covenant’s PYCC and was elected the male Co-Moderator for the year 2005-2006 by members of PYCC.



Keatan King

Another candidate enrolled as a Minister of Word and Sacrament is **Keatan King**, called to serve as Associate Pastor at St. Philip PC, Houston. Keatan

received a BS degree from Austin College in 2009 and her MDiv from Louisville Presbyterian Seminary in 2013.

Keatan interned at First PC, Bryan for the past year, working in all areas of the church. She was the worship leader and preacher at Mo Ranch for the Senior High Celebration Conference in 2012.

New Minister-member welcomed to New Covenant!

Teaching Elder Tim Oleksy from Valentine, Nebraska, has transferred to New Covenant from the Presbytery of Central Nebraska.

“This is what a Nebraskan looks like,” Tim jovially quipped in mock sincerity to the sea of Texans that faced him.



Tim Oleksy

He read from notes he had made on LaQuinta “stationery,” so as not to breach the 3-minute time limit given him. In short he said, “I have 3 sons, 2 Golden Retrievers, and in 3 weeks I’ll be a Texan serving at First Presbyterian in Huntsville!”

Tim’s formal education includes a BA from New York University, his MDiv from Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, CA, and a DD degree from Master’s International School of Divinity in Evansville, IN. Tim begins his ministry in Huntsville July 1.

Next Stated Presbytery
Sat. Nov. 9
Atascocita PC, Houston

Renaming Black Friday to Bless Friday by serving others

Chuck Fox, founder of Bless Friday, spoke about an alternative way of recognizing the start of the Christmas season. The Friday after Thanksgiving has become known as Black Friday, a day of frenzied shopping. For the past 3 years, Houston area churches and Christian organizations have scheduled community service projects on the Friday after Thanksgiving, a day to be known instead as Bless Friday.

“I am excited that Bless Friday has expanded each year. People are getting out the message that when we focus too much on buying things, we lose sight of the real reason for Christmas celebrations – remembering and honoring Christ by serving others,” said Chuck.

Houston congregations have embraced Bless Friday by scheduling community service projects on the Friday after Thanksgiving. Churches

do not have to make any special arrangements – just follow their own outreach programs on that particular day. Churches might volunteer to work with others at a local ministry or participate in service project they can do at home with family or friends.

For more information, contact Chuck Fox at 713-502-6356 or by visiting the website, www.BlessFriday.org.

A celebration of ministry

Chuck Mendenhall, Development Officer for Presbyterian Children Homes & Services, spoke to the assembly about how PCHAS has grown from a single, small orphanage in 1903 to today when PCHAS is focusing on helping families in need, sometimes families on the verge of homelessness.



Chuck Mendenhall

No longer an adoption program, PCHAS is working in Houston to develop living facilities for mothers and their children before situations cause them to be separated. Mothers will spend 9 to 15 months learning life skills, e.g. money management and job-related matters. They will pay rent – a small amount at first, increasing in amount as mothers move toward independence.

A groundbreaking ceremony for 4 duplexes took place May 16 on property owned by St. John's PC, Houston - the first time a Presbyterian church has provided property for such a development. The four-units will house seven single parents, their children, and a live-in social worker. Other New Covenant churches are already pitching in to help to build this project. Chuck asked every church to consider contributing \$1000 to this project in our presbytery.

Dates of 2014 Presbytery Meetings:

Theme: "Making Disciples"

Sat., March 22, at Grace PC, Houston

Sat., July 19, at Covenant PC, College Station

Sat., Nov. 8, at Indian PC, Livingston

*Postlude is published after each Stated Meeting.
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CODA

Elder and minister commissioners received the following announcements and conducted the following additional business:

- TE Howard Edington will serve as Interim Pastor at MDPC, Houston, beginning July 1, 2013.
- Grant recipients of the **Vision Initiative Grants:** Heritage, Houston; First, Wharton, Woodforest, Houston. **Social Justice Grants** have been awarded to First, Brazoria; First, Webster; and St. Paul's, Needville.
- Approved the motion to grant Honorably Retired status to TE Linda Herron, effective Aug. 1, 2013.
- Elected 4 individuals to serve on presbytery committees.
- Elected the following to serve as Ordination Exam Readers for 2013-2014:
 - REs** Bill Hargrove (First, Houston) Julie MacLemore (St. Philip, Houston), Bob Patterson (St. Luke's, Houston), & Jody Harrington (MDPC, Houston)
 - TEs**, Jolene Currie (Chaplain), Kristy Vits (ChristChurch, Bellaire), Laura Grice (Member-at-Large), & Kevin Boyd (St. Paul, Houston)
 - Alternate REs:** Forbes Baker, Westminster, Houston) and Debbie Battise Kleinman (Indian, Livingston); **Alternate TEs:** Christa Brewer (Woodlands Community) and Barrett Ingram (First, Navasota).
- Approved the nomination of TE Jim Currie (First, Pasadena) to the class of 2015 of the Committee on Ministry/Examinations subcommittee.
- Candidate David Augustus has been called to serve as Associate Pastor at St. Andrews-Covenant PC in Wilmington, NC. He will be ordained in Coastal Carolina Presbytery July 14, 2013.
- TE Becky Downs will be installed as pastor of John Knox, Houston, effective Aug. 15, 2013.