

## 'Just what was it like? What did you do at General Assembly?'

Eight of the New Covenant commissioners to the 221<sup>st</sup> General Assembly ably and concisely recounted highlights of their experiences in Detroit. One constant in many of the reports was the tribute given to the YADs (Young Adult Delegates) for their well-thought-out contributions in committees. They listened, asked good questions, and were well-informed.

The panel was moderated by



Julie Wells

**Julie MacLemore Wells**, who is a member of the GA committee, Advisory Committee on the Constitution. The following are highlights of remarks made by the GA commissioners. Their committee assignments appear in parentheses.



Jackie Hannan

**Jackie Hannan** (Social Justice Issues) commented on the breadth of issues discussed and the committee's ability to learn

and change minds through the power of the Holy Spirit. "Every issue is someone's blessing or burden," Jackie noted.

**Nancy Penney** (Presbyterian Foundation, Presbyterian Publishing,



Nancy Penney

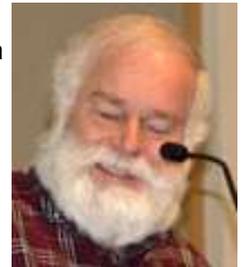
etc.) mentioned how much she enjoyed the rousing hymn singing and seeing the variety of ethnicities and ages of those present. Nancy observed that the gospel was not mentioned as the ills of modern society were discussed.

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**John Hathaway** (Mission Coordination) remarked on the lack of civility of the outside advocates; more graciousness prevailed during plenary sessions.

Discussions about fossil fuels were disconcerting to him. The subject, said Jack, will come up again in the future.

**Sam Jun** (Theological Issues and Institutions) reported that highlights



John Hathaway

... Continued on page 2



## A time of prayer and celebration begins day

Friendly and helpful folks of Covenant Presbyterian were waiting to welcome the commissioners and guests who had made their way through traffic and highway construction to College Station—not for Aggie football, but to meet old and new friends in the churches of New Covenant and to conduct the business of the presbytery.

After a welcome from Chaplain Callie Candee, Parish Associate at Covenant, TE Barrett Ingram (First Presbyterian, Navasota) led the assembly in a time of prayer and praise, reminding all that we are united by the good news of the

Gospel and the triune God that creates, redeems, rules, and transforms all things and people. (*Book of Order*).

The time of worship included the reading aloud of 2013 Necrology Report, honoring church leaders who died in 2013. As Barrett read aloud their names, the assembly remembers and thanked God for the faithfulness and service of these New Covenant pastors, elders, deacons, and trustees.

Morning prayers concluded with the solemn singing of "O Lord, Hear My Prayer." (Taizé Community)

## More news about General Assembly



Sam Jun

for him included Worship, getting to know all kinds of Presbyterians, and discussing important questions such as: What does it mean to be the body of Christ today? How do we build up the body of Christ in a broken world? What is God calling us to do? Trusting in Christ as head of the church is the source of our hope, said Sam.



Ann Hardy

There were 12 recommendations for changes to be made in the *Book of Order* – many that rightly belong in a Manual of Operations, said Ann. For example: Background Checks and Investigating Committees. A motion to ordain presbytery-nominated leaders of New Worshiping Communities did not pass.



Forbes Baker

reported by the 2016 GA. Forbes reminded commissioners that withholding per capita paid by churches does not affect the Office of the General Assembly; rather such actions cause hardships on

those who work in Louisville (they do not vote at GA). Per Capita for 2015 will be \$7.07 per member and \$7.12 in 2016.

**Steve Oglesbee** (Civil Union and Marriage Issues) reported that both the Authoritative Interpretation (AI) and a proposed change in the *Book of Order* passed on the floor of the Assembly. In response to a question about how and why an AI, it was explained that there is a sense of urgency for direction in those states where same sex marriage is legal. The AI has no effect in states where such marriage is not legal. The change in the *Book of Order* must be voted on by the presbyteries.

**Jody Harrington** (Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations) reported that the committee recommended rejection of a overture that the PC(USA) make a distinction between “ancient” and “modern” Israel. Jody cleverly illustrated the concept with a brief song to commissioners. Also passed was a resolution declaring that the booklet *Zionism Unsettled* does not represent the views of the PC (USA); the booklet will no longer be sold on the PC(USA) website. Divestment from three American companies whose activities conflict with church investment policy passed; the issue of divestment will be back in 2016, said Jody.

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Steve Oglesbee



Jody Harrington

## NEW! New Covenant International Student Fellowship

Commissioners learned about a new opportunity to fund a full fellowship each year for a qualified international student to attend Austin Seminary. Such students bring a global perspective to the seminary community that enriches the program of study for all students.

Those receiving scholarships from this fund will come from one of three institutions with which the seminary has cooperative agreements:

- Reformed Theological Collegium in Debrecen, Hungary
- Justo Mwale Theological University College in Lusaka, Zambia
- University of Stellenbosch in South Africa

Gifts received for this fellowship totaled \$4,267.

## Godspeed, Guinn!

The Rev. Guinn Blackwell-Eagleson (United Campus Ministries of Greater Houston) was granted honorable retirement status (HR) during the meeting, effective Aug. 31, 2014.

In her remarks to the presbytery, Guinn vividly and with

humor described what the times were like when she was ordained as a pastor some 30 years ago. Guinn became a member of our presbytery during a time when women were not warmly received as ordained pastors.



Guinn Blackwell-Eagleson

# General Council brings first reading of the revisions of Gracious Reconciliation and Dismissal Policy

By RE Jane Larkin, Postlude Reporter

Laurey Murphy, chair of General Council, reported that after using the Gracious Reconciliation and Dismissal Policy (GRDP) a number of times, General Council has concluded that there are changes which need to be made to the original document. The writing team (Mort McPhail, Katie Cummings, and Jody Harrington), when asked to comment on these revisions, highlighted these points in the revision:

- Emphasis was put on the word *Gracious* to reflect respect and concern for all involved.
- Obsolete or not workable parts of the original procedure were eliminated.
- More opportunities for reconciliation are offered.

The presbytery received the first reading of these proposed

revisions. No amendments were considered at this first reading.

Suggested revisions have been posted on the presbytery website in Our Filing Cabinet in the folder, “Resources for Congregations” or you can search on “Proposed Revisions”).

Commissioners were encouraged to share their thoughts and concerns with the Stated Clerk and the writing team in the four-month interim, prior to the next presbytery meeting in November.

Opportunities for discussing additional revisions will be offered during this period. The first discussion was held July 24. To learn of other opportunities to join in such discussion, consult future issues of *Tuesday Connect* for details or call Lynn Hargrove.

## Congregations receive Presbytery grants

### Vision Initiative Grants for 2014 have been awarded to:

- Atascocita - \$2,250 for outreach to CLC
- First, Angleton - \$2,500 for Messy Church
- First, Wharton - \$2,050 for Young Family Ministry
- Heritage, Houston - \$5,000 for marketing campaign
- Heritage, Houston - \$4,800 for Young Music Ministers program
- Pinecrest, Houston - \$4,000 for enhanced worship
- UCM Aggrieland, College Station - \$6,000 for evangelism events
- Woodforest, Houston - \$5,000 for Young Family Ministry
- Young Nak, Houston - \$1,000 for Block Party

### Social Justice Grants for 2014 have been awarded to:

- First, Brazoria - \$1,100 for Feed My Lambs
- St, Andrews, Beaumont, Diacona of Christ - \$740 for transitional housing for women
- Juan Marcos, Houston - \$1,480 for Family Emergency Fund
- Pinecrest, Houston - \$1,480 for Senior Meals Program
- Presbyterian Children’s Homes and Services - \$1,480 for Single Parent Residential Program
- St. Philip, Houston - \$1,480 for Kids Against Hunger
- UCM Aggrieland, College Station - \$2,000—Justin Lee event
- Webster - \$740 for Summer Enrichment: At-Risk Children

## Summary of litigation

Windwood PC, Houston, filed lawsuit in 2008; litigation continues. New Covenant Presbytery is represented *pro bono* by Fred Cook. The Texas Supreme Court remanded the matter to the Appeals Court.

First PC, Houston, filed lawsuit May 30, 2014. Concurrent to the filing of the case, a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) was granted against the Presbytery. Presbytery is represented by outside counsel. Hearing on the TRO and Defendant’s response is now postponed until September to allow time for possible settlement.

Written reports on litigation involving the Presbytery of New Covenant are included in the Packet, pp. 79-83.

## Discovering who God wants us to be

General Council has set in place a team to peer into a crystal ball, to define and refine who God wants us, the presbytery, to be. This is not about restructuring or developing a new mission statement. It is about listening to what the Spirit is saying through our congregations, small and large, that New Covenant Presbytery will be guided into the next decade.

A Visioning Team has been established to facilitate a series of conversations to explore what has enhanced people’s engagement with their faith. The team has already met with some 13 groups around the presbytery. It will be reaching out to involve all of our congregations in these discussions.

If you would like to schedule a Visioning Team visit, contact Lynn Hargrove.

[lhargrove@pbyofnewcovenant.org](mailto:lhargrove@pbyofnewcovenant.org)

## Candidates complete examinations

Four Candidates preached a sermon before the presbytery to complete their ordination exams. Congratulations Kathleen, Brian, Brandon and Kristi!



Kathleen Davies

The examination of **Kathleen Davies** was sustained in full after Kathleen preached before the presbytery. Kathleen received a BA degree in Religion from Baylor University and her MDiv from Yale Divinity School. She will be ordained and installed as Designated Pastor of Community of the Servant Savior

on Aug. 24, 2014. Kathleen was under care in Southern New England Presbytery.



Brian Long

The examination of **Brian Long** was sustained in full after Brian preached before the presbytery. Brian received a BA degree in Journalism from Texas A&M and his MDiv from Fuller Theological Seminary, Houston. He was ordained July 26 at Atascocita Presbyterian and will be installed as Designated Pastor of New Hope PC, Katy, Aug. 16.



Brandon Gaide

The examination of **Brandon Gaide** was sustained in full after Brandon preached before the presbytery. He received a BA degree in Religious Studies at the U. of Texas, Austin, a diploma in Christian Studies from Regent College in Vancouver, a MTh Degree from Fuller Theological Seminary in

Sacramento CA, and his MDiv from Fuller Theological Seminary in Houston. Brandon will be ordained and installed Aug. 10 as Associate Pastor for Next Generation at Memorial Drive PC, Houston.



Kristi Click

The examination of **Kristi Click** was sustained in full after Kristi preached before the presbytery. Kristi is nominated to serve as Designated Associate Pastor of Spring Branch, PC, Houston. She received a BA in Psychology and Religion from Schreiner University in Kerrville and her MDiv from Austin Presbyterian Seminary. Kristi will be ordained Aug. 10 in North Park Presbyterian in Dallas and installed Sept. 14 in Spring Branch Presbyterian, Houston.

# CODA

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

- Approved the motion affirming that the congregation of Grace PC, Houston, has fulfilled the requirements for dismissal, according to the Reconciliation and Dismissal Procedure of the Presbytery of New Covenant.
- Approved the motion to dismiss the congregation of Grace Presbyterian, Houston to the Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians (ECO), pending completion of the transfer to that body, having met the requirements for seeking dismissal.
- Motion approved to install TE Jim Gill as pastor of Faith PC, Baytown.
- Kevin Rudolph and Patricia Ryan, pastors serving Windwood PC, Houston, have renounced jurisdiction of the PC(USA).
- TE Diane Prevary has transferred to the Presbytery of the James.
- TEs Alice and Bernard Nord have transferred the Presbytery of New Hope.
- TE Amy Klinkovsky will be ordained July 26, 10:00 a.m. at First PC, Bryan. Amy has been called to serve as an Evangelist for a new worshiping community in Presbytery of Pacific.
- Synod of the Sun has granted the Presbytery of New Covenant \$3,500 for people from across the synod to attend our annual Church Officer Enrichment event which will be held Jan. 31, 2015, at ChristChurch, Bellaire.
- Elected as Ordination Exam readers for 2014-2015 were TEs Jolene Currie, Kristy Vits, Kevin Boyd, and Christa Brewer (Barrett Ingram, alternate) and REs Bill Hargrove, Julie Wells, Bob Patterson, and Jody Harrington (Kate Burkart, alternate).

*Postlude is published after each Stated Meeting.*

*Editor: RE Helen Wolf*

*Photographer: TE George Klett (HR), Covenant Presbyterian, College Station*

*Reporter: RE Jane Larkin*

*Circulation: Patricia Brantley and Sandra Lopez*