

CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter of the Presbytery of New Covenant

Growing congregations that passionately engage their communities to make disciples.

Annual Training Event Provides Opportunities for Spiritual, Educational, and Relational Growth



The Great Ends of the Church banners

The Presbytery of New Covenant’s annual Presbyterian Leader Enrichment for church officers and other leaders is slated for Saturday, February 4 from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and will be hosted by St. Philip Presbyterian Church at 4807 San Felipe Street in Houston. The no-cost event provides inspiration and training to equip church leaders in their ministry through a dynamic keynote presentation given by Rev. Dr. John Williams and 12 workshops led by highly regarded teachers and presenters from our presbytery.

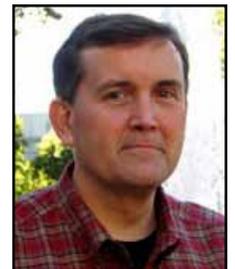
Dr. Williams, who serves as Chaplain and Director of Church Relations at Austin College in Sherman, Texas, holds a Ph.D. in Church History, is a folk & roll songwriter, and an avowed and unrepenting

Presbyterian. He has shared his love of all things Presbyterian through his work as founder and director of the ACTivators program, which has involved Austin College students in leading youth ministry events in 13 states. Part scholar, part cowboy poet, John will share insights about what makes Presbyterians wise and weird and wonderful. Using the lens of Ferris Bueller’s observation that *Life moves pretty fast; if you don’t stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it*, participants will be invited to “stop and look around” at the culture that we’re living in. He will challenge us to keep our eyes open so that we might best be the community of faith, hope, love, and witness that Christ calls us to be.

Six workshops will be devoted to the different Great Ends of the Church and an additional six workshops will address topics such as developing Older Adult ministry, talking about difficult topics, and using the demographic tools of Mission Insite to better understand your ministry field. The hope is that through the Great Ends workshops participants can connect different programing responsibilities with the theological tasks and affirmations behind those efforts.

Although the event is free and open to all interested parties, reservations are essential to help with planning. Optional meal tickets are available for \$16 and cover continental breakfast and lunch. Participants should note that the event falls on Super Bowl weekend and area traffic is expected to be heavier than usual.

Full brochures and registration details can be found on our website at www.pbyofnewcovenant.org.



John Williams

Register online with Eventbrite <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/presbyterian-leadership-enrichment-tickets-29456624557>

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NEW COVENANT CONNECTIONS

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A Letter from the Editor

As we start a new year, we start with a new format of *Connections*. This newsletter has changed several times over the years, and I anticipate that like the previous changes (and changes in general), some people will heartily embrace them, while others will be uncertain or just flat out not like them. Regardless, we have a responsibility to be good stewards – not only financially but with God’s creation and environmental resources.

We’ve increased the number of emailed copies and thereby reduced the number of printed copies from 2,000 per edition to less than 500, resulting in significant savings in postage and paper/ink/electricity/gasoline. (If we don’t have your email address and you send it to us, you can help reduce costs and environmental impact even more.) We’ve changed the format to 8 ½ by 11-inches to make it easier to read online (and to print from there if so desired), and we’re printing in house

to further reduce costs. We’ve moved resources to a separate publication and have made some other content changes as well.

These changes allow us to reduce our environmental footprint and provide significant cost savings. Last year we spent over \$13,000 on printing and mailing *Connections*. This year we’ll spend around \$3,000, saving approximately \$10,000.

If you’d like to provide your email address or prefer to receive *Connections* in print, please contact Patricia Brantley, Circulation Manager, at pbrantley@pbyofnewcovenant.org or 713-526-2585, ext. 101. You may also subscribe online to receive *Connections* and our weekly email, Tuesday Connect, at Bit.ly/TuesdayConnect.

I hope that you enjoy the new format and share our commitment to being good stewards. Abundant blessings for the New Year!

Theodora Pounds, Editor

Board of Pensions Seminars



On January 24 and 25, the PC(USA) Board of Pensions will host two separate one-day seminars at the Presbytery Center at 1110 Lovett Blvd., Houston. On Tuesday, January 24, *Getting in Shape Fiscally* will educate plan members and seminarians looking to get their financial house in order. Attend and learn about money danger signals and building budgets; terms of call and clergy taxes basics; debt reduction, saving, and investing; and estate planning basics.

On Wednesday, January 25, *Render unto Caesar* will help church treasurers, administrators, and active pastors with

terms of call and clergy taxes. Topics covered include: Board resources overview; benefits plan summary; clergy taxes and housing allowance; reimbursements versus allowances; terms of call structure; and retirement savings with the 403(b)(9) Retirement Savings Plan of the PC(USA).

Both events are from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., are limited to 30 attendees, and are \$15 each for lunch and refreshments. Register before January 6 at <http://www.cvent.com/d/jvq3c8> for January 24 *Getting in Shape Fiscally* and at <http://www.cvent.com/d/wvq3cs> for January 25 *Render unto Caesar*.





Clerk's Corner

Rev. Lynn Hargrove, Stated Clerk
Presbytery of New Covenant

There is a scene in the movie *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* when during some sort of plague, a collection team calls out to the local residents to “bring out your dead.” An older family member being carried exclaims, “I’m not dead yet!” I feel like I have heard those cries about mainline denominations in America – that we are dying.

The Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, the new Stated Clerk of the PC(USA), disagrees. In his Reformation Day chapel sermon, he challenged his listeners to “Stop this talk about a dying church. Stop this talk about we are dying. Your church might be dying, but the church of Jesus Christ will never die.”

In her book, *The Great Emergence*, Phyllis Tickle talks about a 500-year cycle of Reformation, and not just in the church. Sociological, cultural, scientific, and technological changes have shaped who we are today. I am amazed by the advances made in the past century in transportation, communication, and medicine. Who would have thought that I could carry a computer in my pocket?

So, how does the church respond to our changing culture? Nelson shared the story of his going into a three-time failed new church development

that was to minister to the poor in Memphis. Twenty-two years later it is still reaching out to people that would not normally be Presbyterian. “Faith is the only translation of that type of story. Still working with the unchurched poor, still small in number, still operating on a shoestring budget,” he said.

He continued, “We must stop measuring the value of our ministry by the size of our bank accounts or an apparently successful megachurch model. I have witnessed successful congregations of people both large and small make a difference in the lives of whole communities of people because they had the will to do what needed to be done before the Lord. I’ve also seen congregations both large and small fail to be the difference that God called them to be because they stopped, they gave up, they got caught up in themselves, and they lost sight of who God was. I am convinced that we can be a denomination that is reborn; that is Reformed. I am convinced that we can ride on the power of Jesus’ joy in all things and once again reclaim the rudiments of a new confession to live as to how God wants us to live in the 21st century.”

He sees now as a time of great Reformation in the PC(USA).

“What are the visions that we see for ourselves? What are the visions we see for our church? What are the visions we see for the kingdom of God? We have a challenge, but we’ve got to begin with prayer and giving ourselves over to God. Not our agenda, but God’s agenda we must seek.”

I find his words challenging and inspiring. Four years ago, the 1001 New Worshipping Communities effort was begun. More than 400 have started in unlikely places across our country. These are signs of new life. Nelson shares a new vision called “Hands and Feet.” Before a General Assembly, teams of people will go to the host city and work to make the quality of life better for some of its less fortunate residents. This might be through building housing or planting community gardens, efforts to strengthen the fabric of the communities. The next three assemblies will be in St. Louis, Baltimore, and Columbus, Ohio – cities known for racial division and poverty. “All challenged to try to move from the gutter-most to the uttermost. And we have a chance to be a redeeming factor as a denomination,” Nelson said.

We begin with prayer and giving ourselves over to God – seeking God’s agenda and not our own. I wonder what are the implications locally for the Presbytery of New Covenant. Are we dying, or are we ready to nurture the signs of new life? Why would we do things differently, and what might happen if we did? I believe that “We’re not dead yet!” How about you?

Overture to 223rd General Assembly

At the November stated presbytery meeting, First Presbyterian Church in Conroe presented an overture for consideration for the 223rd General Assembly, which will meet in 2018. The overture deals with Section G-4.0203 (Church Property Held in Trust) of the Form of Government and proposes adding text at the end of that section as shown in italics:

All property held by or for a congregation, a presbytery, a synod,

the General Assembly, or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), whether legal title is lodged in a corporation, a trustee or trustees, or an unincorporated association, and whether the property is used in programs of a congregation or of a higher council or retained for the production of income, is held in trust nevertheless for the use and benefit



of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); *unless state law requires otherwise.*

The proposed amendment seeks to resolve a conflict that exists between the *Book of Order* and the law of some states. The conflict exists clearly when ecclesiastical law requires the Presbytery to defend the property interests of the PC(USA), and civil law, either through judicial rulings or legislative actions, have rendered G-4.0203 to no force or effect. The overture passed.



Mary's Musings

Mary Marcotte, Associate General Presbyter
Presbytery of New Covenant

I'm a list maker. Sometimes it is an actual written list that affords the satisfaction of literally checking off completed tasks, but sometimes it is one of many virtual lists that I keep in my head and endlessly reshape. Making lists appeals to my desire for order and productivity. It's a way I prioritize time in each day and set benchmarks on how my use of time best helps others.

There are also a couple of dangers in list-making that I can readily acknowledge. One can get so caught up in the desire to appear (even to one's self) to seem more important and productive by the length of our lists. In church settings we act as if our salvation is based on our works rather than God's grace. A second danger is highlighted by churches - and church leaders - who simply repeat the annual church calendar of programs and activities without pausing to ask important evaluative questions. That is the kind of maintenance model that can be an excellent predictor of a church slipping into maintenance mode. It is a practice that squelches dreaming and creativity, which can devolve into programming simply for the sake of programming.

Lovett H. Weems, Jr. (who blogs at Leading Ideas) says that churches often invest a great deal of energy in activities without ever asking how they

relate to what God is calling the church to accomplish. He says that one of the simplest ways a congregation can stay focused on the ends it seeks to achieve, not just the means of achieving those ends, is by formulating a clear "so that" statement: *We will do X so that Y occurs.*

Using the two important words **so that** has the power to change the way we work together so that everything that we do as God's people is shaped toward mission and results in fruitfulness. Give these two little words a try:

We have an annual youth mission trip **so that...**

We support the local food pantry **so that...**

We have a major music production on Good Friday **so that...**

We have Vacation Bible School **so that...**

We exist as a congregation **so that...**

These two little words have great power to help focus our energy, guide our use of resources, and connect the dots in our publicity. They offer measures for evaluation that go beyond "nickels and noses" or "isn't it nice" or "we've always."

I share this **so that** your ministry in the coming year will be blessed with energy, fruitfulness, and joy.

New Covenant Vote on Proposed Constitution Amendments

At the November presbytery meeting, the commissioners voted on proposed amendments to the constitution of the PC(USA) that came out of the 222nd General Assembly in June 2016. Amendments associated with the following items were passed in an omnibus motion:

- 16.A. Child and Youth Protection Policy– On Amending G-3.0106
- 16.B. Parity in Committees– On Amending G-3.0109
- 16-E. Certified Service Requirements– On Amending G-2.1101
- 16-F. The Ministry of Members– On Amending G-1.0304
- 16-G. Access to the Lord's Table– On Amending W-2.4011a. and b.
- 16-H. Revised Directory for Worship– On Replacing the Directory for Worship

Two sections were pulled out of the omnibus motion for further consideration. After discussion, the amendments to Section 16-C. Ordered Ministry Titles were passed, which would allow reclaiming the title "Minister of Word and Sacrament." There was more discussion on Section 16-D. Relationship to the PC(USA) of a Person Who Has Renounced Jurisdiction of the Church. The amendments to this section would allow a previously accused former Teaching Elder to resubmit to the disciplinary process and would remove the time limit for beginning disciplinary proceedings for all alleged offenses. The proposed amendments to Section 16-D failed, by a vote of 37 for and 65 against. Further information on these amendments may be found in the PC(USA) publication found at http://s3.amazonaws.com/dfc_attachments/public/documents/3227196/2016_proposed_boa.pdf. The items above are also keyed to that publication.

2017 Moderator Installed

Rev. David Green, Pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Conroe, was installed as 2017 Moderator for the Presbytery of New Covenant at the November 19 presbytery meeting. The 2016 Moderator, Shelley Hernandez, led the installation service. Thank you, David, for serving.



David Green being installed as moderator

From Consumers to Creators

By Ruling Elder Janet Rainey, New Hope PC in Katy

Rev. Landon Whitsitt, Executive and Stated Clerk of the Synod of Mid-America, was the keynote speaker at the November presbytery meeting. He asked us to consider congregational growth (or its lack thereof) by reflecting on three ideas: theology is art, religion is a mash-up, and church as an artist collective. He talked of the “Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Revolution” as seen in the societal shift from being consumers (having people do things for us) to being creators (doing for ourselves). This revolution has not yet come to the church. The church is living in the world of the DIY Revolution, yet is still asking people to be consumers, not creators.

Landon suggested that our congregations are struggling to grow, not because of struggles over traditional versus contemporary services, or liberal versus conservative thinking but, instead, over whether to be “closed” (resisting change, wanting to be in control) or “open” (willing to do the hard, risky, and messy work of

inviting lots of people to be a part of the process of developing new ways of doing ministry and being church). So how do we become “open”? – by talking about God (theology) in terms of art. If art is “creation of forms symbolic of human feelings” (as defined by philosopher Suzanne Langer), then theology can be thought of as the creation of forms symbolic of human feelings about God. Does our theology define and lock us down, like law, or suggest and set us free, like art? Does our theology, like art, allow for different expressions in different contexts?

Next, after watching two clips from the movie *Pitch Perfect*, we were asked to reflect on “religion as a mash-up” (a new style developed from a mixture, combination, or fusion of disparate elements). For example, Christmas is a mash-up – a pagan culture appropriated and sacramentalized for our purposes. Landon challenged us with the question, “Where do we find the downbeat?”

Landon then suggested that a healthy, growing congregation is like the San Francisco artist collective,



Landon Whitsitt

Group f/64. It knew its purpose, it knew its “why.” People don’t buy what we do, they buy why we do it. If our ‘why’ is that the point of God is to make sure we feel good about ourselves and are happy, we’ll lose. As the church, we will grow if we invite people to be part of a collective that knows its “why” – to live the life Jesus lived: to be incarnate, to participate in mission, to understand we will be crucified for some things we take a stand for, but to know that we’ll be resurrected. Landon’s final screen image was that of a bulldog riding a skateboard. Yes, you really can teach an old dog new tricks!

Together

Time slips by so quickly... I can’t believe it is the end of the Year 2016. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as Moderator for the Year 2016. Thank you!

I would like to ask that we continue working towards the Vision Proposals we as a presbytery have adopted, and they are:

1. Free flowing and extensive communication/conversation between congregations and with presbytery
2. Leadership opportunities year round throughout our presbytery
3. Using technology so that travel no longer hinders participation in presbytery events or committees

4. Extensive and year-round opportunities to engage in service, mission, and evangelism
5. Empowering presbytery to do their work closer to our congregations
6. Emphasizing the “good news” of the PC(USA) and our presbytery to our communities.

So much of this focuses on

communication, in all forms. I would like us to remember this litany... we are stronger together...we can accomplish more together...we can share God’s love in a real way together...we can fulfill our Call to “Go



Shelley Hernandez

out and make Disciples” together.

This year has seen many changes within our presbytery, and we have together lamented, laughed, grieved, and grown. I believe we have grown in our collective and individual faith because we have hope for our future and the future of our place in this part of God’s Kingdom.

I would like to thank all of you for your support and encouragement. I especially would like to ask us all to pray... pray for the person God has selected as our Transitional General Presbyter...pray for our staff and presbytery leaders... pray for our congregations... pray for each other. Friends, WE are the Presbytery of New Covenant and together we can do all things, with God’s help, of course...

May Blessings Abound,
Shelley Hernandez

Intercultural Encounters: Walking Together

A trip is planned for interested members of New Covenant Presbytery with CEDEPCA in Guatemala for



CEDEPCA Pastoral Studies

and in Central America. CEDEPCA

August 4 through 11. These trips are designed to establish long-term relationships between individuals of faith in the presbytery

(The Protestant Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America) has a long-standing relationship with New Covenant Presbytery. Their major emphasis is on pastoral education (pastoral studies and seminary training), women's studies including indigenous persons, disaster relief, and intercultural encounters. The focus of the trip in August will be on pastoral/ seminary education and women's studies. Please join us in this exciting opportunity. If interested, please e-mail Robert Beach at rbeach51@att.net.

Ellie Cole Recognized



Jackie Hannan (left) with Ellie Cole

Rev. Jackie Hannan of Atascocita Presbyterian Church and Chair of the Personnel Committee, acknowledged the retirement of Ellie Cole during the November presbytery meeting. Ellie was thanked for her volunteer work with the presbytery and her support of her husband, Mike Cole, General Presbyter. She was presented with a certificate of appreciation. God speed!

We Connected with Montreat!

By Anne Wilson, St. Philip PC in Houston

Thirty-seven members from nine different PC(USA) churches gathered at Montreat Conference Center in North Carolina from October 25 through 28. Not only did we get to explore the beautiful site, learn about its history, and meet the staff, we connected with one another through worship, Bible study, and fellowship. Thanks to partial funding from a

Vision Grant from our presbytery, we had the unique opportunity to see, touch, and engage with the Heritage Edition of the St. John's Illuminated Bible. We even got to try our own hand at illuminating a scripture passage with gold leaf! Every one of us can't wait to return to Montreat, but we are also so grateful for the new friendships that were made. Our presbytery just got a little closer.



Montreat attendees

Invitation to Read and Conversation

The Synod Coordinating Team is beginning 2017 by reading *Waking Up White: And Finding Myself in the Story of Race* by Debby Irving. Join us in cultivating space for conversation around racial discrimination and racial justice. Share your thoughts and ideas on opening dialogue in our society hungry for justice, equity, and love. Find our Facebook Group "[Synod of the Sun Cultivating Conversation](#)" and help us open a dialogue.



Next Connections Deadline

The next *Connections* copy deadline is Tuesday, February 14 for the March/April 2017 issue. Please send articles and photos to Theodora Pounds at tpounds@pbyofnewcovenant.org.

2017 Presbytery Meetings

March 18 at Clear Lake PC
July 15 at First PC in Sugar Land
November 18 at Northwoods PC in Houston

COMNAVSURFLANT Ministry Center



Chaplain John Potter (second from left) and other sailors from the USS Gravelly after an underway Ash Wed service in February 2016

Chaplain John W. Potter, LT, USN, is a minister member of New Covenant and sends an update on his ministry in COMNAVSURFLANT (Commander, Naval Surface Forces Atlantic):

It's been over a year since my last report. From November 2015 to July 2016, I was deployed again on a Destroyer, mostly in and near the Arabian Gulf, with passage through the Mediterranean on the way in and on the way out. This time I was the senior chaplain in the Destroyer Squadron, helping to prepare and mentor my three chaplain colleagues going on their first deployment out of the Ministry Center in Norfolk to which we all belong. We were a good team, and it was a successful deployment during which we cared for over 1,300 sailors during many long underway periods, combat operations, smuggling interdictions, international training exercises, and some interesting port visits in at least eight countries. We were honored to pastor our outstanding crews through all the major holidays and the typical emotional and spiritual challenges of a long deployment. This time that

included the hard news of a one-month extension. The theme deployment verse I had chosen for my sailors onboard the USS Gravelly was Isaiah 40:31, "...They who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

I still remind myself of this inspiring promise every day. I shouldn't have to deploy again for a while, which is a relief. But I find that I recently struggle more than usual with bitterness and frustration toward the Navy's bureaucracy. Please pray for me to trust God's plans and purposes without just giving up on trying to improve processes and procedures wherever I can. My new job tasking is to help train the new Ministry Center chaplains and to take care of the Cruisers that are docked on the pier or in the yards in Norfolk.

Sara and I still live in our small apartment in the cool, historic town of Portsmouth, Virginia. We are looking into my next set of orders for July 2017, and the probability of staying in the area for a shore duty at one of the chapels.

New Standard Mileage Rates for 2017

The Internal Revenue Service has issued the 2017 optional standard mileage rates used to calculate the deductible costs of operating an automobile for business, charitable, medical, or moving purposes.

Beginning January 1, 2017, the standard mileage rates for the use of a car, van, pickup or panel truck will be:

- 53.5 cents per mile for business miles driven, down from 54 cents in 2016;
- 17 cents per mile driven for medical or moving purposes, down two cents from 2016; and
- 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations.

Per Capita rates

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) approved an increase in Per Capita Apportionment of 38 cents for 2017 and an additional 23 cents for 2018. This is to cover PC(USA) general operating budget needs and financial implications approved by commissioners of the General Assembly. The approved rates are now \$7.50 for 2017 and \$7.73 for 2018.

The Presbytery of New Covenant is funded by benevolent giving, which is separate from Per Capita Apportionment. The per capita dollars that we receive, we forward on to the Office of the General Assembly in Louisville so that our denominational work can continue. We are grateful to all who give so generously to our presbytery. Our per-member share based on our budget is in the \$35-\$40 range. We have been blessed to be able to continue operating on your benevolent giving and not having to charge a per capita to support the work of the presbytery. Thank you!

NEW COVENANT TRANSITIONS

New Minister Members

Rev. Wilma Harris, HR: Wilma retired in Tres Rios Presbytery in 2011 and has moved to Fulshear to be near family. She has accepted a call as Interim Pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Brazoria. She served as a VISTA volunteer in West Virginia in the 1960s and is an avid reader, quilter, and hiker. We welcome her and her husband, Patrick!



Wilma Harris

Rev. Amy Klinkovsky: Amy is the Interim Director and Campus Pastor for United Campus Ministry in Aggieland. She was ordained in 2014



Amy Klinkovsky

and has relocated from Los Angeles to be near family, especially as they face health concerns. She began a ministry among the religiously unaffiliated in Los Angeles and served that ministry from 2012 to 2015.

Rev. Dr. Munn Hinds, HR: Munn has a passion for helping churches through transitions and has accepted a call as Interim Pastor at Bethel Presbyterian Church in West Columbia. He had his master's thesis, an adult Christian education series on John Calvin, accepted at Louisville Baptist Seminary. He and his wife, Patricia, have moved to the area to be near family in Sugar Land.



Munn Hinds

Rev. Kristin Galle: Kristin is serving as the Interim Pastor at Spring Branch Presbyterian Church in Houston. She has a passion for helping congregations not only survive but thrive in seasons of transition. She is currently in the D.Min. program at Brite Divinity in Ft. Worth and is married to Brent Hampton, Pastor at Brenham Presbyterian Church.



Kristin Galle

Rev. Dr. Emmett Powers: Emmett has accepted a call as Transitional Pastor at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Beaumont. He has a M.Div. from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville and D.Min. from Golden Gate Seminary in San Francisco. He is transferring from Presbytery of Arkansas. Welcome to Emmett and his wife, Virginia.



Emmett Powers

Rev. Nancy Benson-Nicol: Nancy has a M.Div. from Harvard Divinity School and was ordained in 2001. Most recently she worked for the Seminary Support Network of the Presbyterian Foundation and is transferring from Arkansas Presbytery. She is a member-at-large working for a non-profit agency in Houston.

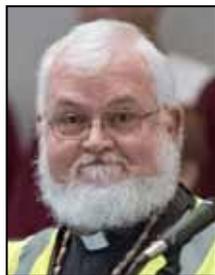


Nancy Benson-Nicol

Retirements

Rev. Dr. Ben H. Stewart III

Rev. Dr. Ben Stewart was granted Honorably Retired status and a service of retirement was held at the November 19 presbytery meeting. He has been one of the three Presbyterian International Seafarer Ministry Chaplains, where he served since 1996. He is currently Pulpit Supply and Moderator of Christ Presbyterian Church in Houston. He preached during the morning



Ben Stewart

worship at the November 19 presbytery meeting about living in a T.B.A. (To Be Announced) faith: you may have a road map, but God will take you where you're going in His way. During his service of retirement, Stated Clerk Rev. Lynn Hargrove prayed for him and presented a certificate of retirement. Godspeed, Ben!

Rev. Mike Cole, General Presbyter

Rev. Mike Cole has served as our General Presbyter for over 13 years and has been granted Honorably Retired status, effective December 31. He was ordained in 1975 and has served churches in Wyoming, California, Oregon, and Texas. As part of the November 19 presbytery meeting's worship service and as his last

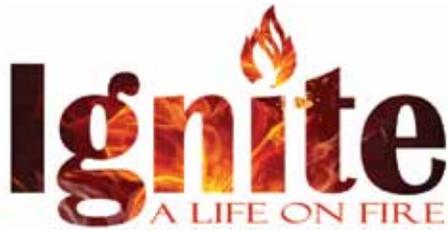
Ecclesiastical action to take the Lord to all of the churches of the presbytery prior to his retirement, Mike led the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. During his service of retirement, Moderator Shelley Hernandez told Mike, "We are grateful for you and pray your next adventure will be filled with all things that bring you joy." Mike's parting words were, "I carry you in my heart



Mike Cole

for the remainder of my days. Among all people, I am truly blessed." The service ended with the laying on of hands and prayer. Many thanks, Mike, and abundant blessings!

YOUTH NEWS



Calling All Youth Groups of Our Presbytery!

CONCLAVES 2017:
February 24 – 26
and March 3 – 5

Join us for fun and faith-filled weekends at Camp Cho-Yeh in Livingston this spring! Our Presbytery's Youth Connection Council (PYCC) is planning two retreat weekends, called Conclaves, that will enable middle and high school youth to grow closer to one another, connect with other youth from all over our presbytery, engage in small groups, experience dynamic worship, and of course, have a blast playing games and making new friends! Youth will also participate in a mission project and explore ways to connect with God. This year's theme is IGNITE: A Life on Fire!

Details: Adult advisors are also invited (21 years old or older; ratio of one adult for every five youth by gender). The cost is \$135 per person (includes lodging, meals, a Christian concert, and conference t-shirt).

Registration Packet available at: www.pbyofnewcovenant.org

Register online at: www.campcho-yeh.org/retreats/reservations-and-pricing/conclaves

Registration DEADLINE: Thursday, January 26

Summer 2017 Youth Opportunities

Youth Mission Trips

Want to team up with other youth groups and go on a mission trip this summer? Contact Caressa Murray at the Presbytery Center to get connected! cmurray@pbyofnewcovenant.org

Synod Youth Workshop

July 10-15, 2017 | High school youth (incoming 9th - graduating 12th) at The University of Tulsa
<http://www.synodyouthworkshop.com/>

Camp Cho-Yeh

Summer camp for ages 6-16; CLT "Christian Leadership Training" for 16 and 17 year-old campers
www.cho-yeh.org/summer-camps-in-texas

Summer Youth & College Conferences at Mo-Ranch

May 15 - May 29

College Connection (ages 18-22)

June 11-16

Teen Leadership Conference (Mo-TLC)

June 25 - 30

Youth Celebration (high school)

July 2 - 6

Junior High Jubilee #1 (junior high)

July 6 - 9

Multicultural Conference (junior and senior high)

July 9-13

Junior High Jubilee # 2 (junior high)
www.moranch.org

Montreat

High school conferences in June and July; middle school conference in July
<http://www.montreat.org/youth-conference-resources/>

Youth Mission Project

The youth of our presbytery will be making mats for the homeless at their spring retreats.

These mats are made from plastic bags that are cut



into strips and looped together to be crocheted into light-weight, water-proof mats. It takes 500 to 700 bags to make one sleeping mat 36 x 72 inches. We need YOUR HELP in collecting plastic bags! They should be collected at the local church and then brought to Conclaves by youth groups or may be dropped at the Presbytery Center. Contact Rev. Caressa Murray with questions at cmurray@pbyofnewcovenant.org.

ILEAD Youth Day of Service

Junior and senior high youth groups are invited to participate in Interfaith Ministries of Greater Houston (IMGH) Youth Day of Service on January 16 (Martin Luther King Jr. Day). This is a unique opportunity to serve with young people from a variety of faith backgrounds, side-by-side onsite at IMGH. Projects include bagging pet food for aniMeals on Wheels program, packing breakfast bags for Meals on Wheels seniors, helping refurbish bikes for refugee clients, and others. A light breakfast and lunch will be provided. For more information, contact Carol Flores at cflores@imggh.org or 713-533-4909. IMGH is located at 3303 Main Street in Houston. www.imggh.org

For more information on youth and young adult events, resources, or curriculum, contact Rev. Caressa Murray, Coordinator for Youth Ministry at the Presbytery of New Covenant, at cmurray@pbyofnewcovenant.org, 713-526-2585, ext. 231, or 281-798-5993 (mobile).

events and happenings



January 1

New Year's Day
Presbytery Center Closed

January 19

Fresh Elastic for Stretched-Out
Educators
Presbytery Center
Houston, Texas

January 20

Coffee with Carl Horton
Presbytery Center
Houston, Texas

January 21

Presbytery Committee
Leadership Event
First PC
Conroe, Texas

January 24 and 25

Board of Pensions Seminars
Presbytery Center
Houston, Texas

February 4

Presbyterian Leadership
Enrichment
St. Philip PC
Houston, Texas

February 9

Great APCE Share
Presbytery Center
Houston, Texas

February 23

Clergy "An Invitation to Sabbath"
Community of Servant Savior PC
Houston, Texas

February 24-26

Youth Conclaves
Cho-Yeh
Livingston, Texas

March 3-5

Youth Conclaves
Cho-Yeh
Livingston, Texas



The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2017
Wednesday, January 18
6:30 p.m. - Evensong | 7:00 p.m. - Prayer Service

Fourth Annual Houston Area Concert of Praise and Ecumenical Prayer Service

Come celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity at the Fourth Annual Greater Houston Ecumenical Prayer Service. Houston denominational leaders from across the city invite all Christians to join them for an evening of music, worship, and prayer as we pray for Christian Unity in Houston and around the world. The theme for 2017, "Reconciliation – the Love of Christ Compels Us," is based on 2 Corinthians 5:14-20.

The ecumenical service will be held at Christ Church Cathedral at 1117 Texas Avenue, Houston, on **Wednesday, January 18**. The evening begins at 6:30 p.m. with Evensong sung by the Cathedral Choir and continues at 7:00 p.m. with the prayer service. The event is free and open to the public. All are welcome.

Music Ministers and Choir Directors are invited to join voices in the spirit of Christian unity. Music rehearsal details are available at www.ncgcchouston.com or 713-775-9222.

For more information, please contact Rev. Gena Davis, Grace Episcopal Church, Houston, at 832-667-8601.



Carl Horton

Preparing a Place for Peace

I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. -John 17: 20-21

We are children of God, living in a world of conflict and diversity. As such, we are called to provide a climate of civility, peace, and unity within our families, churches, communities, and beyond. Join us for a time of learning and conversation with Carl Horton, Coordinator for the PC(USA) Peacemaking Program. Carl facilitates opportunities to engage peacemakers and is highly committed to equipping peacemakers and strengthening all levels of the church for such engagement. It is exciting to welcome Carl to Houston from the PC(USA) offices in Louisville and to join him in his peacemaking efforts!

Please plan to join us on **Thursday, January 19**, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Presbytery Center at 1110 Lovett Blvd, Houston. If you are a volunteer, paid staff person, teaching elder or just curious, you are invited. It will be our pleasure to serve you lunch, complete with a beverage and dessert! Your RSVP will assist our planning. Please send replies to anne.aiko.wilson@gmail.com by Monday morning, January 16.

events and happenings



Coffee with Carl Horton

New Covenant will host a coffee with Carl Horton, Coordinator for the PC(USA) Peacemaking Program, on **Friday, January 20**, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Presbytery Center at 1110 Lovett Blvd., Houston. The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, a mission of PC(USA) and a program of Compassion, Peace and Justice Ministries, is working in a urgent response to the overwhelming culture of violence in our world. It is working toward transforming cultures of violence into communities of peace. Carl will be in Houston from the PC(USA) offices in Louisville. Come for coffee and conversation! For more information, contact Mary Marcotte at mmarcotte@pbyofnewcovenant.org.



Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and Human Relations (HR) Workshop

The EQ and HR Workshop is an intensive session designed to equip leaders in faith-based communities to maximize their impact. Participants learn how to build and practice emotional intelligence skills in a small group setting. Skilled facilitators provide tools and feedback.

The workshop is **January 30 through February 3**, at Mo-Ranch in Hunt, Texas. Early registration is \$695 (full tuition is \$745) and ESCI 360 Survey (a comprehensive self-assessment of your EQ) is \$199. The facility usage fee is \$79 and lodging is available on site. Learn more and register at www.eqhrcenter.org.



Have you ever wished you could attend the amazing Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE) Annual Event? Those lucky enough to attend the 2017 conference in Denver on January 25 through 28 will gratefully share highlights and handouts from their best workshop experiences and resources discovered at the GREAT APCE SHARE, **Thursday, February 9**, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Presbytery Center at 1110 Lovett Blvd., Houston. Bring your lunch and enjoy the conversation. Those attending the conference are asked to bring 20 copies of handouts of their favorite workshops to share. RSVP to Mary Marcotte at mmarcotte@pbyofnewcovenant.org.

Coffee House LIVE Presents Joe Ely

Coffee House Live at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (5308 Buffalo Speedway, Houston) presents Joe Ely on **Thursday, February 16**. Doors open at 7:00 p.m.; music at 7:30 p.m.

Joe Ely's music can be described as



Joe Ely

"Texas Roadhouse," and his accolades include a Grammy Award. Coffee House Live is a community outreach program, presenting music in a family-friendly atmosphere. There is never a cover charge; however, donations are welcomed. sapch.org/coffee/



CLERGY

"AN INVITATION TO SABBATH"

New Covenant clergy are invited to a one-day retreat at Community of the Servant Savior Presbyterian Church at 11303 Hughes Road, Houston, on **Thursday, February 23**. Psychologist Susan A. Lange, Ph.D., will present "An Invitation to Sabbath." Save the date! More information on this free event will be included in Tuesday Connect and on the presbytery's website, www.pbyofnewcovenant.org.

Duerr Lecture Series

Presents Dr. Margaret Aymer

Dr. Margaret Aymer, New

Testament Professor

at Austin Seminary,

is the speaker for

the 20th annual

Duerr Lecture

Series, **February 26**

through 28, at St.

Philip Presbyterian

(4807 San Felipe,

Houston). Dr. Aymer will preach

Sunday morning (8:30 a.m. and 11:00

a.m.) and present free lectures each

evening at 7:00 p.m. on "From Babel to

Pentecost: Postmodernism, Christians

and Scripture." Child care is available

by calling the church office at

713-622-4807. www.saintphilip.net



Margaret Aymer



Presbytery of New Covenant
1110 Lovett Blvd.
Houston, TX 77006-3824

In our Prayers

Praises

Avion Charles Daniels - Grandson of Patricia Brantley, Presbytery's Database Coordinator and Receptionist - born Oct. 5
Arlo Baxter Wagman - Grandson of Mary Marcotte, Associate General Presbyter - born Nov. 20
Westminster PC in Galveston - back in their rebuilt sanctuary after an arson fire last year

Health Concerns

Evelyn Darden - Mother of Sharon Darden, Coordinator for Committees on Ministry and Preparation for Ministry
Dick Howard - Member of Seafarers Board of Directors
Rev. Joseph Kho, HR - Former Pastor at Formosan PC in Houston
Mother of Gary Long - RE at Northwoods PC in Houston and Nominating Committee member
Rev. Paul Nazarian - Pastor at Northwoods PC
Sylvia Washer - Former Committee on Ministry member and wife of Rev. Phineas Washer, HR
Father of Jean Young - Ruling Elder at Pinecrest PC in Houston

Deaths

Stepmother of Rev. Melissa Krabbe - Westminster PC in Galveston - Nov. 4
Stephen Mason Montgomery, Jr. - Grandson of Betty Montgomery, wife of deceased Rev. Bob Montgomery, HR - Nov. 12
RE Charlotte Carroll - Faith PC in Pasadena - Nov. 29
Rev. Connie Alexander, HR - Dec. 4
Sue Miller Pogue - Mother of Rev. Dean Pogue of Grand Lakes PC in Katy - Dec. 11
Rev. Jack Livingston, HR - Dec. 16