

'Passionately Engaging Community' Living Generously

By RE David Fox, St. Philip PC, Houston

The theme for this year's presbytery meetings is one part of the presbytery mission statement: "passionately engaging community." Who better to exemplify this theme than TE Wil Howie, founder of Living Waters for the World who delivered the morning sermon. In Luke 6:27-38, Jesus speaks about living generously by doing unto to others as you would have them do to you. "No more tit for tat," as Eugene Peterson puts it. And in Matthew 14:22-23, Jesus tells his disciples not be afraid when they see him walking toward them on the sea in the midst of a raging storm.

Wil repeatedly reminded the

assembly: be generous; do not be afraid; do something new in an unexpected way. That's just what Wil did twenty-six years ago. He began installing water filtration systems that would deliver clean drinking water in communities on the Texas-Mexico border. In ten years he and his partners had installed fifteen systems.

Then came the new idea: Teach others! In 1989 he founded Clean Water U in Oxford, Mississippi. Today LWW has trained 2000 installers, teachers, and administrators who have installed 725



TE Wil Howie

water systems in 24 countries.

Living Waters for the World not only provides clean water, but intentionally builds and supports relationships with the community through multi-year covenants wherever systems are installed. Mission teams share knowledge about health and hygiene that can be passed from person to person in addition to how to install and operate the new water filtration system.

Wil's strong presentation urged participation and service in the world community. "Do not be afraid. Do not lose heart. Serve others and live generously."

Note: RE David Fox and his wife Joyce have been involved in LWW for the last three years, encouraged and inspired by Wil, his work and service to God. A number of New Covenant's churches are involved in Living Waters for the World. Among them are ChristChurch Bellaire, Clear Lake PC, St. John's PC, St. Philip PC, and St. Thomas PC, Houston.

'Come Sing, O Church in Joy'

Glory to God, Hymn 305

After traversing miles of concrete highways, commissioners and visitors to the meeting of New Covenant Presbytery were rewarded with the beauty and greenness that is the Woodlands and the gracious hospitality of the Woodlands Community PC. Graceful trees just outside the tall windows of the sanctuary seemed to be eavesdropping on all that was happening inside!

On behalf of the congregation, Rev. David Jones welcomed the assembly. After explaining the practical information needed for the day, he spoke about how Woodlands

Community PC had been certified as an Earth Care Congregation through the PC(USA) after completing certain activities and projects in the areas of worship, education, facilities, and outreach.

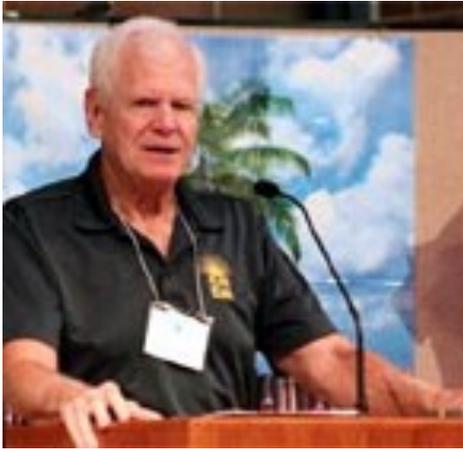
The congregation is caring for God's earth through integrating earth care into all of church life. A large display in the narthex described how a congregation could become good stewards of God's earth.

For more information, visit <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/environment/earth-care-congregations/>.

Keynote Address: Doing Mission Right Conversations about Mission and Culture

By RE Janet Rainey, New Hope PC, Katy

The keynote address, “The Elephant in the Room,” was given by RE Chris McRae, Executive Director of Solar Under the Sun. He began his talk by telling the story of Elephant and his friend Mouse who liked to play together. One day, the elephant



RE Chris McRae

was joyfully dancing by himself as they played; mistakenly he stepped on Mouse. “Sometimes doing mission with Americans is like dancing with elephants,” said Chris. To do mission right, mission teams must first have a conversation about the cultural differences of those they serve – before they travel. Groups should

learn what is appropriate dress for a culture, learn a few words and phrases in their language, ask before taking photos, learn what to expect about local food, and be aware of how other cultures view time.

Teams should include socializing with the community and building relationships, before doing any work or bringing in any equipment.

Recognize the community as partners. It is important to build local credibility. One way to do this is by using “in-country partners” (local support persons) to help with transportation, accommodations, and whatever challenges are presented.

Solar Under the Sun was birthed in partnership with Living Waters for the World in 2009. The Synod of the Sun recognized the need for a new ministry of solar power systems to pair with the clean water treatment system. Many cannot afford to tap into the grid power necessary for electric power. The sun’s delivery is free. There are now people in Haiti and Kenya who clean water and electricity through Clean Waters for the World and Solar Under the Sun working together.

This time... the Revised GRDP



RE Mort McPhail

Before considering the Revised Gracious Reconciliation and Dismissal Procedure, General Council offered a motion to approve the “special rule” concerning further revisions to the GR&DP. This “special rule” to limit amendments to those previously submitted at least 4 days prior to the July 18 stated meeting was approved with a 2/3’s vote. After reviewing the history of first readings, RE Mort McPhail discussed changes that have been made to the document and reasons for them.

The motion to approve the second reading of the Revisions to the Gracious Reconciliation and Dismissal Procedure, as amended, passed 128 to 45 with 1 abstention. Details about the changes made to the document, are on pages 9-14 in the Addendum .

Dismissal of Peace PC, Pearland

After going through the Discernment Process as prescribed by the Presbytery of New Covenant, 63 of the 95 members of Peace PC, Pearland, cast ballots concerning dismissal from the PC(USA) at a congregational meeting held June 7, 2015. Of the 63 ballots cast, 49 were in favor of dismissal; 11 against dismissal; 1 abstained; 1 ballot was blank; and 1 was not clear enough to count.

The presbytery approved the

motion to validate that the congregation of Peace PC, Pearland, had fulfilled the requirement for seeking dismissal

according to the Gracious Reconciliation and Dismissal Procedure of the Presbytery of New Covenant. Having met this requirement, the presbytery voted to dismiss the congregation and its pastor, Scott Cummings, to the Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians (ECO)



pending completion of the transfer to that Body.

TE Jim Gill, the Organizing Pastor of Peace PC, led the body in heartfelt prayer for the congregation and ministers of Peace PC. With handshakes and hugs, members of Peace PC, Pearland, left the sanctuary.

Welcome to New Covenant!

New Faces and Old Friends



TE Shelby Dies

Chaplain from Mission Presbytery, Shelby has transferred to New Covenant Presbytery to serve as Chaplain. Shelby received a BS in Nursing from UT Austin & UTMB, Galveston and a BA in Psychology from UT-Austin. She earned her MDiv in 2004 from Austin Presbyterian Seminary and was ordained in the PC(USA) in 2010.



TE Michael Sydnor

Michael returns to New Covenant Presbytery from Grace Presbytery where he was a member-at-large. He is living in Cypress. Michael's MDiv is from Union Seminary/PSCE in Richmond, VA. He was ordained in the PC(USA) in 1992.



TE Lucia Oerter

Lucia is transferring from Tampa Bay Presbytery and is serving as Transitional/Interim Pastor at Pines Presbyterian, Houston. She received her MDiv from Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis in 1996 and was ordained in the PC(USA) in 1997. Her husband, John, is also a transitional pastor.



TE Dan Walker

Dan, HR, is transferring from the Presbytery of New England. He received his MDiv from Austin Presbyterian Seminary and was ordained in the Presbyterian Church in 1996. His first call was in New Covenant Presbytery!



TE Emily Owen

Emily, Member-at-Large, is transferring from Charlotte Presbytery in NC. She received her BA in Communication Arts/speech emphasis with a Major/Minor in Religion from Austin College. She earned her MDiv in 2008 from Austin Presbyterian Seminary. Emily's husband, Henry, is the Director of the Nature Discovery Center in Bellaire.



TE Hector Rivera-Velez

Hector is transferring from Mission Presbytery and will serve in New Covenant as a Hospice Chaplain with Vantage Hospice Care. He earned a BA degree in Social Sciences/Psychology from the University of Puerto Rico in 1984. Hector received his MDiv from Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA in 1989 and was ordained in the PC(USA) in 1992.



TE Tom Sharon and TE Linda Sharon

Tom and Linda are transferring from Grace Presbytery. Tom is serving as Chaplain at Texas Children's Hospital. He received his MDiv from Austin Presbyterian Seminary in 2006. Linda, HR, received her MDiv from Austin Presbyterian Seminary. And was ordained in the PC(USA) in 2007. Both she and her husband were previously members of New Covenant. Said Linda, "We are glad to be back home!"

Business to be sent to next General Assembly

An overture from the Session of Pines PC, Houston, which seeks to delete the current language in the *Book of Order* dealing with Renunciation (G-2.0509), was approved by a vote of 90-yes; 44-no. The overture will be submitted as business at 22nd General Assembly 2016 and, if passed, would be sent to presbyteries for approval.

The paragraph being considered for removal reads:

Whenever a former teaching elder has renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding as the accused, that former teaching elder shall not be permitted to perform any work, paid or volunteer, in any congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

More information may be found on pages 11-12 of the Addendum.

Vision Team report

The Vision Team has met with hundreds people in New Covenant Presbytery in past months to gather information on ways we can make New Covenant better and to determine what comes next. By synthesizing the collected information, a final report will be made in Nov. 2015 that will help us live into the future. The team looks forward to more conversations with congregations between now and October.

Exam readers elected

Elected to serve as Readers of Ordination Examinations:

Teaching Elders: Jolene Currie, Kristy Vits, Kevin Boyd, Lauren Suba, with Laura Grice as alternate.

Ruling Elders: Bill Hargrove, Julie Wells, Christy Craig, Jim Allison, with Kate Burkart as alternate.

Service of Candidacy for Josh Young



Josh Young, Clear Lake PC, Houston, was enrolled as Candidate for Ministry of Word and Sacrament. The candidacy phase provides individuals a time for full preparation to serve the church as a Teaching Elder.

Josh told the presbytery about his journey of faith throughout his life—raised in the faith by his family and feeling an inner call to ministry while in high school. “I want to point others to Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, just as other have pointed me throughout my life.”

With the recommendation from the Committee on Preparation for Ministry and after answering the constitutional questions, Josh was approved and enrolled as a Candidate.

Surrounded by those who have supported him during his time of inquiry, he was charged by TE Kevin Boyd, Chair of Committee on Preparation.

Josh, who serves as Director of Music and Worship at Clear Lake PC, Houston, is married to TE Rachel Young, Associate Pastor of Spiritual Formation at Clear Lake PC. Josh and Rachel are expecting their first child.

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:

- The status of Honorable Retirement (HR) was granted to TE Harland Merriam, effective 5/31/15. Harland served as pastor of St. Andrews Presbyterian, Beaumont, for 27 years. He is a veteran and military chaplain. He is a great developer and lover of plants. Two vans were needed just to move his plants to Florida where he now lives.
- The motion to approve the Proposed Teaching Elder Ethics in Cases of Disagreement with Denominational Polices, Statements and/or Decision in the Presbytery of New Covenant failed. Yes-55 No-86; 3 abstentions. (p. 13 in the Packet)
- TE Sharon Gazaway is serving as Temporary Interim Pastor at St. Andrews PC, Beaumont.
- TE Jonathan Britt was ordained and installed as Designated Associate Pastor of St. Thomas PC, Houston on May 31, 2015.
- James DeMent, St. Philip PC, Houston, has been enrolled as Inquirer.
- TE Margaret “Peg” Ferguson is serving as Parish Associate at New Hope PC, Katy.
- General Council has approved the sale of the property of Alden Bridge PC, The Woodlands, to West Houston Chinese Church. The property closed in May 2015.
- Commissioners attended a Mission Fair during the lunch time with Informative displays from 11 of New Covenant ministry partners: Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, C.U.P.S., Heifer International, Living Waters for the World, Pinemont Apartments, Seafarers Ministry, Solar Under the Sun, Texas Presbyterian Foundation, United Campus Ministry in Aggieland, and United Campus Ministry of Greater Houston.

**Next Stated Meeting
of the Presbytery of New Covenant**

Sat., Nov. 21 – St. John’s PC, Houston