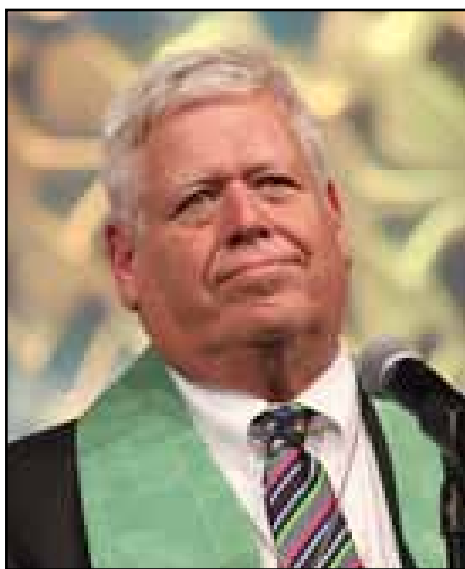


connections

Growing congregations that passionately engage their community to make disciples.

Moderators of 221st General Assembly



Heath Rada

Heath Rada, a retired ruling elder who served the American Red Cross as CEO of the Greater Richmond chapter and president of the Presbyterian School of Christian Education, was elected Moderator of the 221st General Assembly of the PC(USA). Serving with him as vice moderator will be Larissa Kwong Abazia, pastor of First PC of Forest Hills, a multicultural, multiethnic congregation in Queens, New York.

Heath Rada said he first said “No” when asked to consider standing for moderator – telling those who approached him at a NEXT Church meeting that “I don’t think I represent the face of our denomination any

longer.” But people encouraged him to step forward, telling him he had gifts for reconciliation and building connections the church would find valuable.

Heath said he agreed to run if those encouraging him would help him find a partner for the task – and he chose as his vice-moderator Larissa Abazia, a Chinese-American pastor who has served as a Core Team Member and Co-Moderator for Racial Ethnic Youth Women Together (REYWT), an organization committed to equipping and empowering young women of color through leadership development, training, and networking in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). “I believe, says Larissa, “that we need one another to embody the fullness of the Church. Our ability to live in fellowship will define our faithfulness to God’s call to beloved community.”



Larissa Abazia



New Covenant heads to Aggieland!



Friends greet each other at the Presbytery meeting.

Head on up to College Station for the July 19 presbytery meeting at Covenant PC! Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. with the Call to Order at 9:00 a.m. It is hoped that links to the Packet and other materials needed by commissioners will be posted on the presbytery website before the 4th of July holiday.

Our General Assembly commissioners will report that day on their experiences in Detroit and share their impressions of serving on various committees and voting in plenary. It was decided to include this recap in a regular stated meeting of the presbytery, rather than in a separate gathering. Since you do not need to be an elected commissioner to attend any presbytery meeting, all are welcome to attend.

There are four candidates who will be taking their last step prior to installation and ordination. Their preaching will be woven throughout the day as we celebrate God’s call on their lives. These candidates, called to congregations large and small, bring a diversity of gifts to their new ministries and to the presbytery.

Our friends at Grace PC, Houston, voted recently to be dismissed to the Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians. Let us send them with our blessing, as we take action on their request.

There will be other business throughout the day. May we come together to celebrate the good and gracious work of the Presbytery of New Covenant!

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NEW COVENANT CONNECTIONS

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From the Cole Mine

By Rev. Mike Cole
General Presbyter,
Presbytery of New Covenant

“The Tortoise and the Harried”

On my daily commute on the Gulf Freeway (or the Gulf Parking Lot, depending on the day), I have developed a strategy for avoiding traffic jams. It's not a perfect strategy, but often it does keep me moving instead of sitting. This week I had an important appointment at the office and had left home in plenty of time to arrive early. But the freeway had other ideas for my commute as traffic was backed up almost from the moment I entered the freeway.

Once I was on the road, I noticed a red SUV with its emergency lights blinking, traveling at about 45 mph in the far right lane. The car had a severely out-of-balance tire that wobbled and shook. I made my way around the disabled car and began to execute my strategy for avoiding the traffic.

I exited the freeway where



I knew the signal light was favorable and would let me keep moving; only this day other drivers were doing the same. How dare they steal my plan! It took five signal changes before I made it through the intersection. Then it was on to phase two of my strategy – re-entering the freeway for one exit and exiting again. Wouldn't you know it, I was not the only one who wanted to avoid the slowdown.

Four signal changes later, I made it back onto the freeway, only to find myself behind the red car with the wobbly tire. I laughed out loud at the irony of realizing that I could have driven slowly and just been patient and been further along than I was as a result of my harried attempts to control that which was out of my control.

At times, life gets complicated. This is one of those times for me as General Presbyter and all of us as the presbytery. I don't know about you, but when things seem to be spinning out of control, I tend to try even harder to control them. And the

harder I try, the less in control I am and the more frustrated I become. As a friend told me once, “being God is exhausting work!”

It is at times like these that I have to exercise patience and trust that God really is God and will work things out as they are intended to be. On the rare occasions when I yield control (as if I had it in the first place!) and rest in the Lord's providence, I find life much more enjoyable and balanced. For me it's a daily struggle to recognize my place in the scheme of things – which is to be faithful and fruitful, but not in control.



In Christ,

Leaders recognized by Presbyterian Outlook Foundation, Inc.

The board of directors of the Presbyterian Outlook Foundation, Inc., has announced that the 2014 Ernest Trice Thompson Award will be presented to three recipients: Barbara Wheeler, Joseph Small and John Buchanan. The award, the functional equivalent of a lifetime achievement award for statespersons in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), was presented at this year's General Assembly in Detroit.



Barbara Wheeler

Barbara Wheeler in all of her roles, has pursued the goals of pressing the church toward justice, toward Christian discipleship and helping a diverse church “hold onto one another while still holding onto our different convictions.”

John M. Buchanan, editor and publisher of The Christian Century and retired pastor of Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago, served as Moderator of the 208th General Assembly of the PC(USA).



John Buchanan

Joseph Small is former Director of Theology, Worship, and Education Ministries for the Presbyterian Mission Agency. He is a core member of “Re-Forming Ministry,” co-chair of the international Reformed-Pentecostal Dialogue, board member of the Center for Catholic and Evangelical Theology, member of the Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches.



Joseph Small

Each of the award recipients has worked tirelessly to build bridges of understanding and partnership between believers of different convictions and ideologies.

Churches in Brief

Action taken by First Presbyterian, Houston

On May 29, 2014, the Stated Clerk of New Covenant was served notice of a lawsuit and Temporary Restraining Order from First PC, Houston. The lawsuit seeks a declaratory judgment “recognizing the exclusive, complete, and absolute ownership and control of First Presbyterian Church of Houston over all of its property, both real and personal.”

The lawsuit seeks a payment of a maximum of \$100,000 from the Presbytery of New Covenant and reimbursement of all legal expenses. The Temporary Restraining Order seeks to enjoin the presbytery “from taking any action that could affect the property rights of First Presbyterian Church of Houston,” including: “changing the locks, initiating any disciplinary action against anyone, electing an Administrative Commission, or interfering with the normal duties of anyone at First Presbyterian Church of Houston.” Even though the Temporary Restraining Order states that “the threat of Presbytery action is imminent,” the leadership of the presbytery has not taken any action that would lead to any of these “threats.”

The leadership of the presbytery is deeply saddened by this

action which adds to inner turmoil of a congregation with a great heritage of 175 years in the PC(USA) and its predecessor denominations. We have spent much time in prayer and deliberation regarding this and are doing our best to respond appropriately on behalf of the presbytery until we can meet as a presbytery. The General Council, acting as Trustees of the presbytery, has retained legal counsel for the purpose of defending the presbytery in this matter. A full report and a request for the ratification of the actions of General Council will be presented to the presbytery at its stated meeting on July 19, 2014.

Action taken by Windwood Presbyterian

The congregation of Windwood PC, Houston, has voted unilaterally to withdraw from the PC(USA), which the presbytery does not recognize as a legal action. Kevin Rudolph and Pat Ryan have renounced jurisdiction which removes their ordination. Litigation initiated by Windwood PC in 2008 continues.

Clerk's Corner continued from right

I am grateful for the ministry of Presbyterian Women which connects women of all ages in bible study, fellowship, and service locally and at the presbytery, synod and national levels, and trains them in leadership. You hosted the Synod gathering just last year. Carol Davis has served in those higher levels, and has been invited to be part of the national team.

I am grateful for a presbytery that has the capacity to be gracious, especially in the Reconciliation and Dismissal process. You are the eighth congregation to engage it. I am grateful to the forty men and women, both ruling elders and teaching elders, who have given their time willingly to help these congregations wrestle with big questions with no easy answers.

In the calling of this congregational meeting, you have been told to vote for dismissal to ECO. I'm going to ask you now to think for yourselves... to think about what is best for this congregation. Please lay aside your personal interests and search your hearts for what is beneficial for the whole group. Is it to board the plane that is being built in the air, or is it to stay in the PC(USA)? Think for yourself.

And in all things, may we continue to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. To him be the glory now and forever.



Clerk's Corner

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

I was invited to speak on behalf of the PC(USA) at the congregational meeting held at Grace Presbyterian Church on June 2014. I had five minutes to make my statement. This is what I said:

My almost 92 year old mother-in-law was on the cradle roll of Second Presbyterian Church of Houston. There she was baptized, confirmed, married, and raised her own family. She received a firm foundation for her faith in Jesus Christ as she was “trained up.” And she also learned to think for herself. When the congregation was voting to move out to the suburbs and merge with St. Matthew's to become Grace Presbyterian Church, she voted against it. She thought that Second Church should be committed to ministering to the “street people” on Main Street. Of course, she was in the minority, and the church moved out here.

Thinking for one's self is a hallmark of the Presbyterian Church. We put great importance on education and lifelong learning. We study scripture and other writings as we do theology in community. It is how we put our faith into practice proclaiming Jesus as Lord and Savior.

I appreciate the theological diversity in the PC(USA). It is how I grow personally and spiritually. We read in Proverbs, “Just as iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” In dialogue with people of differing viewpoints, I re-examine my own and am opened to new possibilities. I am challenged to think for myself.

My friends value this about the PC(USA). “I feel whole in a PC(USA) church, where I find consistency in the teaching and friendly people. I always know who I am and to whom I belong when I step inside.” A second said, “I would rather err on the side of grace than on the side of judgment.” Others answered that it is the church that taught them to love Jesus and nurtured them in their faith. Another answered, “If I leave when things get tough, what kind of child does that make me? When I was baptized and confirmed, the church promised to nurture and love me. When I was ordained, I promised to seek its peace, unity, and purity. The church has lived up to its promise; so will I.”

I value all of this and more. I am grateful to those missionaries who serve in dangerous places, like Jacob and Aliamma George from this presbytery who are working in South Sudan. We have hundreds of people sharing the love of Jesus Christ in 75 countries around the world.

I am grateful that Presbyterian Disaster Assistance hits the ground immediately after a tragedy, like Hurricane Ike, or a church fire like our friends at Heights just experienced, or a school shooting like this week at UCSB. And they stick around caring for people to help them recover from the devastation.

I am grateful for a denomination that is doing something positive in thinking out of the box of traditional church. More than 200 new worshipping communities have begun in two years with the goal to start 1001 in 10 years.

I am grateful for our Presbyterian colleges and seminaries who teach people like me. I graduated from both Trinity University in San Antonio and Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. In schools like these, our young adults are being challenged to think for themselves.

I am grateful for a denomination that cares about social justice and challenges its members to make a difference for the least and the lost. I have been blessed in my ministry to advocate for my homeless friends living along 290, who forced me to think in new ways about the structures that are supposed to help, but often are difficult to navigate.

continued on the left



Mary's Musings

By Mary Marcotte
Associate General Presbyterian,
Presbytery of New Covenant

I was in serious need of a bit of Pentecost spark as I prepared to write this column in the week before that big red day celebrating the movement of the Holy Spirit in the early church. In the midst of divisions and fear and lost loved ones and vicious news reporting, what could I say that might bring light and hope, encouragement and joy? What might be helpful rather than abstraction, relevant rather than arcane?

So I did what a good 21st century servant of the church does. (I say this both seriously and with my tongue firmly in my cheek!) I asked my facebook friends what I should write about. Immediately, good and thoughtful suggestions popped into my comment strand. You folks know who you are – I'm going to be exploring all of these as time goes on. I'm reminded how much relationships matter. Not only did you help me with suggestions, you reminded me that it is important what I write – and that I have a unique forum for addressing issues relating to congregational health in this column.

At first glance, those comments seemed to have little to do with one another. But the more time I spent reflecting on them, some themes began to emerge. In a time of demise of the effectiveness of programmatic expressions of church, what comes next? Let me say that again in another way: Simply adding programs and doing church bigger, better, faster will not guarantee growth or let me try again: If you build it, they will not automatically come.

Our paradigm for being church has and is shifting. And believe it or not, I think that can be good news. When the culture is not quite so supportive of church, we have the opportunity to move from a clubhouse culture to more intentionally being a disciple-making movement of people of God following the mission of God into the world. God is not done and calls us into a divine partnership.

One of my wise colleagues in ministry suggested: *Low anxiety, permission to fail, and outward focus leads to new creative initiatives, new life, and growth. I feel like our churches need to fret less, try more things, and laugh with each other and enjoy our God no matter what. Rinse and repeat.* I believe he is right on target. Focus on what resources God has placed in our midst to take action that expresses the gospel in our walls and beyond our walls and how we can use those resources of wisdom, energy, time, talent, and treasure is life giving.

I'm recently returned from a marvelous vacation in Eastern Europe and England. My husband and I visited dozens of amazing churches, ranging from the enormous gothic St. Vitus in Prague to the tiny St. Ivan's Cave in Budapest. We exulted in the Baroque ornamentation of the Universitätskirche Jesuit Church of Vienna and the extraordinary carved altarpiece of St. Mary's in Krakow. We found prayer space in the touristy bustle of the cathedral church in York and the serenity of the monastic church of Holy Cross community (Heiligenkreuz Abbey) in the Vienna Woods. I took some awesomely beautiful and inspiring photos, but what I share with you here is a simple street sign about a church ministry in York. It is not beautiful, but it is real.

Church leaders had space. They knew people needed to eat. They knew the community *beyond* the church valued fair trade practices



continued on the right

Community News

What does it mean to be Presbyterian?



Looking for solid educational materials on what it means to be Presbyterian? Visit Theocademy (<http://www.theocademy.com/>) where you will find top quality and wonderfully articulate videos and discussion guides. Drawing on the vast gifts of our denomination, Theocademy wants to provide members of the Presbyterian Church (USA) with the finest theological education they can get short of attending seminary.

Video lessons (each 11-13 minutes long) and discussion guides are designed for new member classes; they also would be great for use by Sunday School classes

and sessions. There are plans in development for a series that will help ruling elders and deacons better understand the ministry they have been called to. These video lessons will be available July 2014. The series is called "Being Presbyterian: Foundations of Presbyterian Discipleship."

Titles:

A People of Grace

Wicked Bad (how do we talk about sin and evil)

Who Do They Say I Am?

Update Your Faith System (Study and Worship)

Blessed to be a Blessing

Mary's Musings continued from the left

and perhaps a bit of direction on where to find it. And maybe, just maybe, those folks would be looking for pastoral care and guidance as well. The order on that sign signals an approach: We will meet the needs you know you have – and we can offer something more. We will meet you where you are, not where we think you ought to be. Of such is the living witness of the faith.

I love beautiful buildings, stained glass, rich carvings, and glorious music. They inspire me. But being the church is about so much more. When we give our whole selves to God, when we dwell in the realm of God's abundance and draw the circle of God's care wide, good things happen. Things happen beyond our schemes and control, but not beyond God's dreaming vision. May it be so.

Highlights

In the midst of it all...

By Rev. Linda McCarty, President & CEO of Faith In Practice

"...I believe that God is in charge and I know that all of the doctors believe that too, so I am not afraid." She spoke these words to Rev. Kristin Huffman (Memorial Drive PC, Houston) as she waited for surgery at Las Obras Sociales del Santo Hermano Pedro in Antigua Guatemala. Kristin was there to pray with her - a living example that what she said was true. The doctors believe it too.

From its beginnings, Faith In Practice has trusted and rested in the knowledge that this medical mission to Guatemala belongs to God... that God has called us to serve in Guatemala and that God is in charge. In the midst of the chaos and poverty, in the midst of the pain and death, in the midst of it all - God is present in a profound way, bringing forth peace and abundance, healing and life. God is in charge, so we are not afraid. And, in that knowledge we rejoice.

All Faith In Practice teams (medical, surgical, and dental) include a pastor or worship leader. These important team members lead daily devotionals, pray with volunteers, and pray with patients and their families. They remind us that this mission belongs to God. They remind us not to be afraid and to rejoice in that knowledge.

New Covenant Presbytery was well represented in Guatemala on our teams this year. Rev. Wayne Eberly (Pines, Houston),

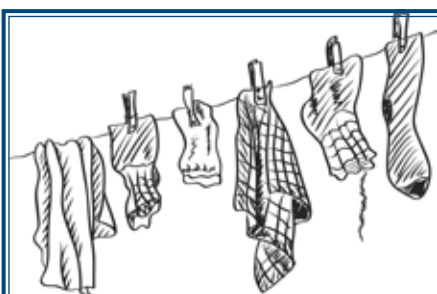


FIP Patients prays for physician.

Rev. Kristin Huffman (Memorial Drive, Houston), Rev. Belinda Koenig (Pines, Houston), Rev. Paul Nazarian (Northwoods, Houston) and Rev. Dave Steane (Memorial Drive, Houston) served on Faith In Practice teams as pastors. They were joined by many church members from across the Presbytery who also served as spiritual leaders. While Faith In Practice is an ecumenical Christian organization, nearly 40% of our spiritual leaders are Presbyterian.

This year 1,100 U.S. volunteers served on 40 teams. They served beside 750 Guatemalan volunteers who consistently and gently strengthened our faith. Together, our corps of volunteers, nearly 2,000 strong, witnessed to the new community that is, and is yet to be, providing care to more than 25,000 of the Guatemalan poor.

Please consider joining FIP as we respond to God's call to serve, rejoicing in the knowledge that God is in control. For more information, visit www.faithinpractice.org or contact us at 713-484-5555.



Save the Date!

The next meeting of **Fresh Elastic for Stretched-Out Educators** will be Thursday, September 18, at the Presbytery Center.



Making History Today

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

"Learning From Another World"

A few weeks ago a friend and I went out to lunch. He had accepted a call to a church in another presbytery. When he came into my office, he gave me a book that was published in 1870 and bore the title *Presbyterian Re-union Memorial Volume, 1837-1871*. He guessed that I might find this old volume of some interest. Over the past several weeks I have perused, with great enjoyment, its contents.

This 568-page tome that is yellow with age (and might soon disintegrate) contains articles by representatives of the Old School and the New School branches of the Presbyterian Church that divided in 1837 not over geography or national politics, but over theology and polity (among other things, the Old School stressed the Westminster Standards, while the New School embraced revivalism).

Among the areas that are covered, there are two chapters entitled "Biographical Sketches," one of Old School leaders and one of New School leaders who had died during the 33 years of this division. The Rev. William B. Sprague wrote for the Old School, while the Rev. Z. M. Humphrey wrote for the New School.

Some of the Old School luminaries mentioned are such persons as **Archibald Alexander** (Princeton Seminary), **Samuel Miller** (also of Princeton Seminary), **George Junkin** (president of Washington College, later to become Washington and Lee University, and Miami University of Ohio; also father-in-law to Confederate General Stonewall Jackson), and **Phineas Gurley** (pastor of New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. during the Lincoln presidency).

Among the New School biographical sketches were **Henry White** (professor of theology at Union Seminary, New York), **Eliphalet W. Gilbert** (served two churches in Wilmington, Delaware, before going to the Western Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), and **Lyman Beecher** (professor and president of Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati and considered one of the finest preachers in the country).

Of Gilbert, the author of this essay wrote, "He was a man of clear mind and of decided views; skilled as a controversialist, yet of such courtesy to his opponents, that when the joust was over they were among the first to sit down in his tent." I wonder if we might learn something of the gift of grace of welcoming those from the other side of some church controversy into "our tent," or perhaps daring to visit our "adversary" in "their tent."

One of the benefits of such volumes as this one is the opportunity to enter and better understand another world. In doing so, we might not only learn something about those who have gone before us, but also something about living today with each other with a spirit of grace, peace, and mutual understanding.

As we make history today, it might behoove us to read some of the old volumes that are still around and learn something from "the saints who from their labors rest" as we make our own pilgrimage and witness.

Greening Presbyterian Churches

The Woodlands Community PC, <http://wcpc.publishpath.com/>, has been certified as an Earth Care Congregation by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Environmental Ministries. This honor speaks to the great commitment that this congregation has to caring for God's earth. The Earth Care Congregation certification is designed to recognize churches that have made the commitment to take seriously God's charge to "till and keep" the garden.



To become an Earth Care Congregation, Woodlands Community PC affirmed the Earth Care Pledge to integrate environmental practices and thinking into all facets of their church life. It



also completed projects and activities in the fields of worship, education, facilities, and outreach.

The Earth Care Congregations program was started in 2010 by PC(USA) Environmental Ministries. For more information about the program and to read "Guide to Greening Presbyterian Churches," visit www.pcusa.org/earth-care-congregations.

Know someone going to Texas A&M University this fall?

United Campus Ministry in Aggieland at Texas A&M University would like to connect with any New Covenant students who will attend the university this fall! You can help this effort by emailing Katherine Doebling, revkatherine@aggieucm.org, the names and contacts of any incoming students you know.

You may also invite them to visit <http://aggieucm.org/> where they can learn more about the ministry. UCM would like to welcome them to College Station before they come for Fish Camp and Gig'Em Week!



Session Review and Treasurers Workshop

Clerks of Session are asked to pre-register for the Session Records Review with Stated Clerk Lynn Hargrove (lhargrove@pbyofnewcovenant.org), to be held after the presbytery meeting at Covenant PC in College Station on Saturday, July 19. Bring all session minutes since those last reviewed, including a copy of the page bearing the stamp indicating the last review, your church's Minutes Check Sheet, and your church's Church register.

Forbes Baker, Director of Business Affairs and Finance, will offer training and assistance at a

Treasurers Workshop for church treasurers and bookkeepers during the presbytery meeting at Covenant PC in College Station – 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. with a break for lunch. Please register by contacting Forbes at fbaker@pbyofnewcovenant.org.



Mission &

Synod of the Sun Mission Story: New hope in small church



The project begins.

First PC in Baird, Texas, is a small congregation of approximately thirty-five members located in Palo Duro Presbytery. The church sits at the end of the main street and is very visible to anyone coming into town. Following the death of a long-time pastor when many assumed that the church would close, the congregation found new life and renewed energy.

A 100-year-old, deteriorating manse sat next to the church building. Realizing that this eyesore was a detriment to the witness of the church, the congregation applied for a grant from the presbytery to have the building torn down. That tear-down was only phase one!

Phase two involves the construction of a pavilion that can be used for community events, family reunions, weddings, and other gatherings. This facility in the heart

of the community will be available for special community events as well as church events, with the hope that it will bring about a renewed spirit of unity and excitement in both the church and the community. Through its high visibility and demonstration of community support, the church feels that others will be drawn to the congregation and will create a culture of generosity in the church and community. The congregation also received two grants from the Synod of the Sun - one for the construction of handicap bathrooms that will be accessible from the pavilion, and another to assist the congregation with the construction of the pavilion itself. Working together with presbytery and Synod, a real sense of excitement for ministry and mission is being developed in this small town church.

Connections deadline

Mark your calendars now for the next 2014 copy deadline for Connections

The next **Connections** copy deadline is Wednesday, August 13, for the September/October issue. Please send articles and photos to Helen Wolf at any time hwolf@pbyofnewcovenant.org.

Ministry

A special opportunity for you to visit Israel!



Pope visits Hand in Hand School in Jerusalem.

The Jewish/Presbyterian Dialogue Group of Houston is sponsoring a trip to Israel November 1-8, 2014, to dialogue with Israelis and Palestinians, to tour holy sites, and visit the Hand in Hand School. A center for Jewish/Arab education in Jerusalem, the school was recently in the news when Pope Francis recently visited Jerusalem. It was chosen for the visit because it is the only school in Jerusalem that includes the diversity of faiths.

To read about this school,

which is supported by the presbytery and the Jewish/Presbyterian Dialogue Group of Houston, look in Our Filing Cabinet on the presbytery website (www.pbyofnewcovenant.org) in the folder, Articles of General Interest.

For more information about the November trip, contact Mike Cole at mcole@pbyofnewcovenant.org or 713-526-2585.

The school's website is <http://www.handinhandk12.org/inform/schools/jerusalem>.

2014 One Mo-Trip



Sixth through twelfth graders are invited to get connected with other Presbyterian youth from around Texas for "One Mo Trip" to Mo Ranch (Hunt, Texas) before school kicks into full gear. Join 150 other Presbyterian Youth from around the great state of Texas for an unforgettable Labor Day Weekend at Mo-Ranch, August 30-September 1!



Cost: \$109 each person (covers five meals and two nights lodging in Loma Linda or River Dorm). Adult chaperones must accompany. Registration is by church only – there is limited space so get your group registered! Contact: David Moore 800-460-4401, ext. 244. Tell David you are with the Presbyterian "One Mo Trip" Youth Retreat.

Linking the church and the arts together

Fuller Seminary is pleased to announce the appointment of David Taylor to serve at its campus in Houston as Assistant Professor of Theology and Culture. Dr. Taylor



David Taylor

will also serve as the Director of Brehm Texas, a new initiative of Fuller's

Brehm Center for Worship, Theology, and the Arts. His service begins July 1.

An experienced author, pastor, public speaker, and playwright, Taylor is the first Fuller faculty member in Houston to focus on theology and the arts.

Currently completing his doctoral studies in theology and worship at Duke Divinity School, Taylor also

studied at Georgetown University, University of Wurzburg, University of Texas at Austin, and Regent College, where he received degrees in theology and biblical studies.

"David's appointment fulfills a vision I've had since the Houston campus was developed to launch a worship, theology, and the arts initiative in the culturally rich environment of Houston," said J. Frederick Davison, executive director of the Brehm Center. "David brings a unique set of gifts, scholarship, and experience that will enable Brehm Texas to address the needs of the community and flourish."

Read more at <http://www.fuller.edu/about/news-and-events/articles/2014/fuller-to-launch-initiative-of-brehm-center-for-worship-theology-and-the-arts-in-texas/>.

Calling all youth workers, volunteers and parents!



Make plans to attend EQUIP on Saturday, August 16, 9:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at St. Philip PC (4807 San Felipe, Houston, TX 77056). This day of workshops and worship will educate, equip, and empower you to minister and care for young people. Youth ministry teams of volunteers are invited for training that will prepare them for the new school year! Parents, too, are invited to learn about the "real world" of teenagers and how to help them navigate the complexities of faith and life. This is a free event and open to everyone.

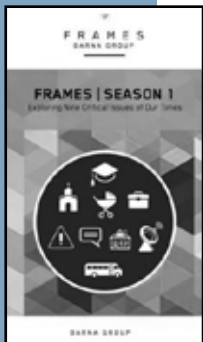
Register online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/equip-tickets-11862163049>.

8:30 a.m.	Registration Opens
9:00 a.m.	Gathering and Opening Worship
10:00 a.m.	11:30 a.m. Workshop 1
11:45 a.m.	1:00 p.m. Lunch (\$8)
1:00 p.m.	2:30 p.m. Workshop 2
2:30 p.m.	3:00 p.m. Closing Worship



In the Resource Center

New DVD and Book Resources



Frames: Season 1 – Exploring 9 Critical Issues of our Time - DVD

This series of 9 brief (5-8 minute) videos address topics raised by Barna Group research on critical issues of our day and can equip leaders with understanding to live and lead in more meaningful ways in the midst of complicated times. The presentations can kick start great conversation in small groups, church boards and non-profits. Topics include Wonder Women, Multi-Careering, Sacred Roots, Schools in Crisis, 20 and Something, The Hyperlinked Life, Greater Expectations and Fighting for Peace. Study groups may choose to go deeper by ordering minibooks that correspond with particular frames.



More Bad Girls of the Bible

by Barbara Essex. Pilgrim Press. 2009

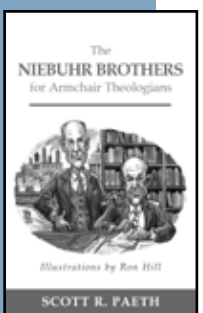
Barbara Essex helps us look with fresh eyes at 14 women of scripture that have either been discounted, overlooked, or given an undeserved bad rap. Each chapter includes solid biblical background and excellent reflection questions to draw the reader into a more profound personal understanding of the texts. Chapters include women of both the Old and New testament: Hagar; Siprah and Puah; Miriam; Zipporah; Bathsheba; Rizpah; Huldah; the unnamed crippled woman, the Syrophenician woman; Martha and Mary; the woman at the well; and Mary Magdalene.



Girlfriends: Exploring Women's Relationships in the Bible

by Barbara Essex. Pilgrim Press. 2013

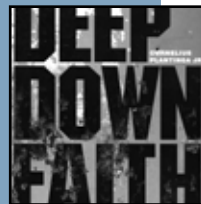
This ten session study on women's relationships in the Bible includes both solid biblical scholarship, engaging questions to help participants process their own relationships in light of scripture, and suggestions of contemporary books and films that could be pulled into these rich conversations. The material could be woven into an intriguing study or a fabulous retreat. Biblical characters are the entry point to explore relationship between sisters, mothers and daughters, wives and mothers-in-law, mothers and grandmothers, first wife and second wife, and more.



The Niebuhr Brothers for Armchair Theologians

by Scott A. Paeth

This highly accessible volume in the Armchair Theologians series offers a compelling introduction to the life, times, and theological work of Reinhold and H. Richard Niebuhr. Learn more about two of the most significant American theologians of the 20th century, their formative moments, and how their thoughts developed in different ways as each sought to develop a theology that was integrated with his ethics and as they addressed issues of war and economic crisis.



Deep Down Faith

by Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. Faith Alive Resources. 2012

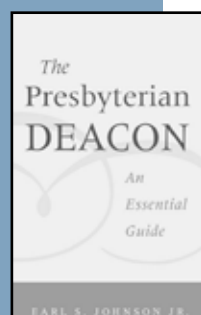
An update of a classic devotional text from the Reformed Church of America can be used for individual or group study and unites a study of scripture, Reformed Confessions and reflection on how what we believe impacts daily life. The 24 topics could be spread throughout 25 weeks or 24 days – or the five themes could be explored as individual studies. Thematic topics include Our Awesome God, Our Need of a Savior, Our Way Out (God Provides Salvation, Our Place is Church and Kingdom, and Our Future With God.



Good Mourning

by Allan Hugh Cole. WJK Press. 2008

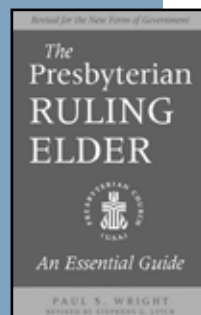
In this brief book Allan Hugh Cole explains the process of grief and what loss can do to us, identifies ways of coping, and reminds us of the hope that we can find in mourning. Ultimately, Cole offers a plan of "good mourning" - a way to work through the loss and rebuild life with new strength. Cole describes what it takes to be engaged in good mourning instead of endless suffering and demonstrates how faith and prayer can be practical tools in rebuilding life after loss. This is a helpful book for not only those who have experienced personal loss, but for those who minister to and with them.



The Presbyterian Deacon: An Essential Guide

by Earl S. Johnson

This update of the classic study for Deacons reflects polity changes in the new Form of Government. Topics covered include biblical background, deacons in the Reformed tradition, an overview of responsibilities, ordination questions, the *Book of Confessions*, and what it means to be a deacon in the 21st century. Each brief chapter ends with discussion questions which make this both an excellent handbook for deacons and an outstanding piece to use in training these valued leaders in the church.



The Presbyterian Ruling Elder: An Essential Guide

by Earl S. Johnson

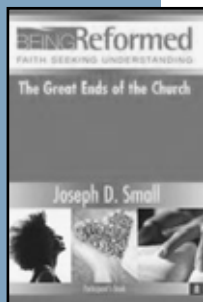
This updated edition of the classic resource for Session members reflects polity changes of the new Form of Government. Topics include not only the work of the Elder, but issues related to call, qualifications to serve, relating to the pastor and to the larger connectional church.

In the Resource Center

New DVD and Book Resources

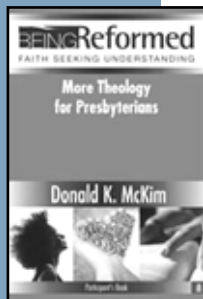
Being Reformed series

This 6-week series is an outstanding study for use with adult groups either Sunday morning or midweek. Participant's books include highly readable, short essays and questions for further thought, as well as a spiritual practice linked to the lesson. Leader's guides offer clear directions for an engaging session and provide tips on how to summarize key points in the Participant's book to help bridge the gap created when students have not read the essays. Many other titles are available.



New titles include:

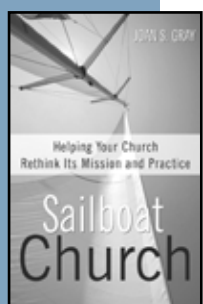
The Great Ends of the Church – explore the mission of the church as laid out in F-1.0304 in the *Book of Order*. These six essential missions of the church will give shape to the agenda of the General Assembly as it meets in Detroit this summer. The Great Ends spur us to action as we are called to exhibit, promote, preserve, maintain, shelter, nurture, and proclaim the kingdom of God and its practices.



More Theology for Presbyterians – author Don McKim addresses six topics with uniquely Presbyterian understanding – Creation, Providence, Salvation, Church and Sacraments, Christian Life, and Hope. This is a great follow-up study for those who enjoyed *Theology for Presbyterians* (still available and covering topics the Bible, God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.)



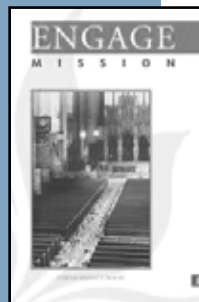
Following Jesus Today: Challenges and Opportunities addresses questions every church should deal with as it faces its future – what does it mean to proclaim the gospel in word and deed; what does it mean to dwell in the embrace of God and to extend that embrace to others; what does it mean to love neighbor as self, to proclaim truth, to find the language of hope, and to engage in the costly commitment to love?



Sailboat Church: Helping Your Church Rethink its Mission and Practice

by Joan S. Gray

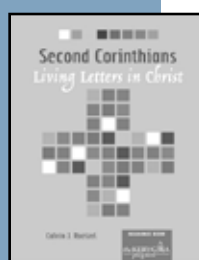
Returning to the image that informed her book, *Spiritual Leadership for Church Officers*, Gray encourages leaders to shift from preoccupation with the many daily, practical concerns about their church and to focus instead on using the guidance of the Holy Spirit to reinvigorate the life of the congregation. This is a great resource for those serious about reframing the mission and practice of particular congregations. Topics include the practice of leadership, dealing with crisis, navigating the waters, and establishing a guiding vision. The book also includes forty days of sailing prayers joined with scripture and brief reflection questions that can prepare leaders for the practice of listening to God. There is an extensive bibliography arranged thematically around issues of prayer, discernment, and spiritual growth.



Engage: Mission

A part three of the excellent Engage curriculum series from the Office of Evangelism

This seven-part study which is available with a Participant's book and a separate Leader's guide explore what it means to personally join in God's ministry and mission in the world surrounding our churches. Each lesson includes Bible study and reflections on the topics of aligning our lives with God's Mission, The New Normal, Do Our Hearts Break Over the Things that Break God's Heart? Living as Missionaries, The Sent Community, and Identifying Ministry Shifts.



Second Corinthians: Living Letters in Christ

14-session Kerygma Resource

Out of the crucible of danger, deceit, and despair recorded in 2nd Corinthians comes Paul's most profound statements of discipleship, ministry, and calling. A fine companion resource to the Presbyterian Women's Horizons Bible study Resource for 2014/15, *Reconciling Paul*. This Kerygma study contains print materials for teachers and learners as well as brief DVD commentaries.



Awesome Adventures

Designed for broadly graded elementary Sunday school classes

These undated 13-week studies are well designed for a variety of uses. Each study is published in a notebook format with reproducible resources for students. The resource is ideal for use when there is shared teaching leadership and extremely economical at only \$45 for all student and leader materials for any size group. Each lesson has comic book style coloring pages which connect the adventures of two modern day children with the biblical focus of each lesson.

- **God's Amazing Son** – 13 stories drawn from the gospels of the life of Jesus and the teaching stories he told.
- **Paul's Amazing Quest** – picks up the study with Paul's conversion in Acts 9 and following his story through Acts 28 and also includes selections from four of Paul's letters.



Wee Children at Church

52 weeks of resources for 18 to 36 month-old-children

Resources, included in one bag, include Bible stories, a CD of digital resources that can be emailed to parents, suggestions for developmentally appropriate play activities, and room set-ups which can be incorporated in exploring the bible stories as well as helpful information for teachers and caregivers. This undated resource can be used for years.

June-July-August

Presbytery Peru Mission
Trips

July 4

Independence Day
Presbytery offices closed
Houston, TX

July 11-13

Youth Celebration
Cho-Yeh
Livingston, TX

July 12

Young Adult Mission Day
Project C.U.R.E.
Houston, TX

July 19

Presbytery Meeting
Session Records Review
Treasurer's Workshop
Covenant PC
College Station

July 21-26

Synod Youth Workshop
University of Tulsa

July 29-July 31

Weekday Ministries
Conference
Marriott Westchase
Houston, TX

July 30

Retired Pastors: Astros
Game
Sign-up Deadline: July 15
Call Mary Currie (281-488-
6731, ext. 343)

August 14

Retired Pastors: Lone Star
Pinball Machine Museum
Hockley, TX
Call Mary Currie
(281-488-6731, ext. 343)

August 16

Youth Workers "Equip"
Event
St. Philip PC
Houston, TX

August 30-September 1

One MO Trip at Mo-Ranch
6th-12th grade youth
Mo-Ranch, Hunt, TX

JUNE 21**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

(POP) Lay Chaplaincy Training

Training as a POP Lay Chaplain will prepare you for visiting patients and their loved ones in hospitals. POP lay chaplains have a heart for listening and a love for God's people when they are lonely, sick, and waiting for answers as they move through the coping and healing process of healthcare treatments. Join this ministry that is 40 years old!

The training will be held Sat., June 21, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Memorial Drive PC, Houston, in room 101. (Park on the north side of the church). Cost, \$50, includes classroom instruction, on-site hospital clinical training, and course materials. To register, visit the POP website at www.popministry.org. Choose Training, click "Register Now," enter your information, and list June 21 POP Training in the Notes Section.

We need you! And, you will love this ministry!

JULY 12

RECONNECT with friends
REIGNITE your faith
REACH out to others



Young Adults, ages 18-30, are invited to a day of mission work, Saturday, July 12, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at Project C.U.R.E. Come help sort donations of medical supplies that are desperately needed by doctors and nurses in underserved areas. And as a bonus, you get to connect with other Presbyterian young adults in our presbytery! RSVP by contacting Caressa Murray at cmurray@pbyofnewcovenant.org or 281-798-59931

Project C.U.R.E. Warehouse is located at 10250 Westheimer Road, Houston 77042. Attire: Jeans and closed-toe shoes, required.

JULY 25 - AUGUST 23

PW Horizon
Bible Study Overviews



What can we learn from revisiting 2 Corinthians and considering Paul's theology and ideas as they relate to the context of our time? The 2014-2015 Horizons Bible Study invites us all to ask whether or not we understood Paul's writings clearly in the past and to read his letter afresh in light of the issues we face in our time. Concepts of shared partnership, power in weakness, healing, reconciliation, love, and a new apostolate all figure prominently in Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty's reading of Paul.

Presbyterian Women of New Covenant Presbytery invites you to an overview of the 2014-2015 Horizons Bible Study, *Reconciling Paul: A Contemporary Study of 2 Corinthians* by Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty. Mary Marcotte, Associate General Presbyter of New Covenant, will lead five overviews for the PW Bible study July 25, Aug. 1, 8, 22, and 23, throughout the presbytery. All overviews are free.

Please register one week prior to date.

Friday, July 25

First PC, Church, Pasadena | 4647 Preston Road
9:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon

Register with Sue Clark at mclark8638@aol.com, 713-946-3608, or with Sandy Denmon at denmonSL@comcast.net, 281-812-6246

Friday, August 1

Pines PC, Houston | 12751 Kimberley
9:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon

Register with church secretary at 713-467-2234 or with Linda Taylor at bbugtaylor@sbcglobal.net, 281-496-3174

Friday, August 8

St. Andrew's PC, Beaumont | 1350 North 23rd Street
9:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon

Register with church secretary at 409-892-8611 or billies@saintandy.org

Friday, August 22

Northwoods PC, Houston | 3320 FM 1960 West
9:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon

Register with the church office at Nicole@Northwoods.org or 281-444-8861 or with Betty DeJarnett at bettydejarnett@att.net, 281-025100205

Saturday, August 23

First PC, Crockett | 715 East Goliad
Registration - 11:30 a.m.

Lunch (no charge) 12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m.

Overview - 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Register with Sue Hyde at suehyde617@msn.com, 936-967-2531 or 605-880-1707

more events and gatherings to enjoy!

JULY 31 - AUGUST 3

National Multicultural Conference



The 15th National Multicultural Church Conference, presented by Presbyterian Mission, will be held at the historic Hilton Fort Worth, starting Thursday, July 31, and ending Sunday August 3. This year's conference will be held under the theme, "Journeying and Awakening into God's Diverse World." Attendees will celebrate the gathering of people "from every nation, tribe, people, and language." (Rev. 7:9) and awaken to God's purpose for the mounting diversity in our communities.

Discover the wonders of diversity and learn how to minister effectively in rapidly changing communities. Journey together into the amazing future that focuses on differences rather than sameness - that is innovative, sustainable, and transformative. There will be a variety of pre-conferences and ten major tracks.

Details about the conference and registration information may be found at http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/multicultural/pdf/2014-mcc-quickview.pdf. Register ASAP and no later than July 10. Scholarships are available.

AUGUST 9-10

Summer Lecture Series

The St. Philip Summer Lecture Series is delighted to welcome Dr. Rodger Nishioka to New Covenant Presbytery. Rodger is the Benton Family Associate Professor of Christian Education at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, GA.

Dr. Nishioka's theme for the weekend of August 9-10 is "Roots and Shoots: Presbyterians Growing into God's Future." Rodger will explore connections with the past, present, and future by discussing how "we are growing, thanks to the faithfulness of persons in the past and sprouting new ways of being Church, thanks to God's call into God's future."



Rodger Nishioka

Schedule for the weekend:

Saturday, August 9

- 9:30 a.m. Gathering and sign-in
- 10:00 a.m. Keynote I
- Noon Lunch will be available for a \$5 donation
- 1:30 p.m. Keynote 2
- 3:30 - 5:00 p.m. Youth session (grades 6-12) with Rodger
- 7:00-9:00 p.m. Young adult session (ages 19-30) with Rodger (held at private residence)

Sunday, August 10

- 8:30 & 11:00 a.m. Worship with Rodger preaching
- 9:45 a.m. Intergenerational CE class

All events are open to the public and will be held at St. Philip PC, 4807 San Felipe, Houston. RSVP for lunch and childcare by Friday, August 1, to laurie@saintphilip.net.

AUGUST 22-24

PRESBYTERIAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER WEEKEND

Why settle for a good marriage when you can have a great marriage?

Why settle for a "good" marriage when you can have a "great" marriage? You can make the leap on a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend! Gary and Ann Long will be hosting a Presbyterian Marriage Encounter, Friday-Sunday, August 22-24 at Northwoods PC, Houston. Marriage Encounter is 44 hours where married couples can get away from jobs, kids, chores, and phones—and focus only on each other. If you'd like greater depth, growth, and enrichment in your relationship, you'll like the difference a Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend can make! Join millions of couples worldwide who have learned how to keep their marriage vibrant and alive. For registration information, email grl@guttermann.com.



SEPTEMBER 19-21

Young Adult Weekend



Young adults, ages 22 through 39, are invited to join other young adults for a weekend of meaningful worship, thoughtful keynote presentations, ample free time, and wonderful fellowship! This amazing weekend, September 19-21, offers a chance to reconnect with God and friends, relax at Mo-Ranch, and recharge spirits.

Housing will be at Guest Lodge, \$130; at Pheasant Run, \$168, double occupancy and \$258 single occupancy. For more information contact Caressa Murray, cmurray@pbyofnewcovenant.org, or <http://www.moranch.org/Camps-Conferences/Conference-Calendar/Young-Adult-Weekend>. You may register online at <https://nucamps.com/moranch/events/CheckAvailability.asp?EventID=21>.

NOVEMBER 8



The Synod of the Sun Mission Convocation will be held Saturday, November 8, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. at Woodhaven PC in Irving, Texas. Keynote speakers will be Vera White of the 1001 New Worshipping Communities initiative, and networking specialist Bill Lawser of the Synod of Lincoln Trails.

This is a gathering for congregations, individuals, and organizations that are passionate about expanding, connecting, and empowering their mission, e.g., for all presbytery mission committees, synod mission partners, programs, and networks. Workshops, worship, guided networking, and more!

Cost: \$15 including lunch. Discounted hotel rates are available. Register beginning July 1 at www.synodsun.com.

In Our Prayers

TEs Jonathan (St. Paul's PC, Needville) and Caressa Murray (Presbytery Coordinator for Youth Ministry) – Jonathan's mother is undergoing chemotherapy.

REs Mary Lee and Walter Going – Memorial Drive PC, Houston – Mary Lee's mother, Helen Carter, died April 19, 2014. Mary Lee was Moderator of New Covenant Presbytery in 2012.

Kendall Boyd, brother of TE Kevin Boyd (St. Paul PC, Houston) – undergoing cancer treatment. Kendall formerly served New Covenant as Coordinator for Hurricane Ike Recovery.

RE Carlton Wilde, Jr., First PC, Houston – Carlton's mother Marty died April 19, 2014. Carlton is a board member of Austin Seminary and has served as a clerk of session.

Family and friends of RE Barbara Eudey, St. Philip PC, Houston – Barbara died March 15, 2014.

Family and friends of RE Everett A. Marley, Jr., St. Philip PC, Houston – Everett died May 5, 2014. He was a former moderator of New Covenant Presbytery and served as elder, deacon and trustee at St. Philip PC.

TE Charles Tekyl, a former moderator of New Covenant Presbytery – his wife Randee died May 6, 2014.

TE Elder Jackie and Jim Hannan, Atastocita PC. Jim's mother died May 6, 2014.

RE Garry Schoonover, Grand Lakes PC, Katy – prayers for healing. Garry was Moderator of the Presbytery in 2010.

Family and friends of RE Rosemary Summers McBride – Rosemary died April 20, 2014. She was one of the initial group of women ordained as ruling elders in the PC(USA). She served as a trustee of Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services for fifteen years.

TE Alan Brehm, First PC, Dickinson – Granddaughter Alice Lynn Brehm was born May 10, 2014.

TE Eid Abdelmissah, Arabic NWC – prayers for healing. Eid has been coping with illness which included hospitalization.

TE Mike and Ellie Cole, Clear Lake PC - health concerns for their son Colin.

*HR = Honorably Retired *RE = Ruling Elder



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NEW COVENANT

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