

# CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter of the Presbytery of New Covenant

Growing congregations that passionately engage their communities to make disciples.

## Confirmation Rally - October 28



Youth completing confirmation this year will gather at St. Philip for a Confirmation Rally. This event is sponsored by the presbytery's Congregational Resource Team and is designed for all congregations (particularly for those with only 1-3 students in confirmation) in the presbytery.

Along with youth, confirmation teachers, pastors, youth workers, and parents are invited for a day of worship, energizers and games, and workshops focusing on:

1. the Women of the Reformation
  2. the Ministry of the Presbytery
  3. the Gift of Connectionalism
  4. the Marks of Presbyterianism
- We want to give youth a sense

of the connectional church in action, help them engage with peers cross-congregationally, and use this special Reformation anniversary to communicate to them the marks of the Reformed church.

To register your congregation for this event, please email Rev. Keatan King at [keatan@saintphilip.net](mailto:keatan@saintphilip.net)

### SCHEDULE

- 10:00 a.m. Welcome and Energizers
- 10:30 a.m. Morning workshop rotations
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch
- 12:45 p.m. Afternoon workshop rotations
- 2:15 p.m. Closing Worship
- 3:00 p.m. Conclusion

## Welcome, Kristi Blankman!

Kristi Blankman, Coordinator of Youth Ministries grew up in Dallas. As a member of NorthPark Presbyterian Church, she attended youth group and participated in many mission trips.

These experiences would prove to be very influential in her call. She began to feel that seminary was in her future. Mo-Ranch summer camp was also



Kristi Blankman

influential. After high school, she returned to the Hill Country attending Schreiner University where she was heavily involved in student government and Campus Ministry.

With a double major in Psychology and Religion, Kristi began her studies at Austin Seminary. She took a year off to serve in Guatemala as a PC(USA) Young Adult Volunteer. Here she discerned a call to community outreach and mission. When she returned to Austin, she began her studies in Social Work at U.T., graduating with an M.S.W. She was awarded the seminary's Hendrick-Smith Award for Mission and Evangelism.

Kristi has served as Designated Associate Pastor of Spring Branch Presbyterian church since July 2014. Her call is to empower individuals to proclaim the Good News of Christ and equip the Church for concern and service to the life of the human community.

## Young Adult Weekend at Mo-Ranch

Young Adult Weekend is a chance for adults ages 22-39 to recharge, relax, and get away for the weekend of September 15-17. The theme for the weekend is "Improvising with God: God's Work in an Imperfect World" and the keynote will be lead by the Rev.

MaryAnn McKibben Dana. Registration is now open on the Mo-Ranch website, [www.moranch.org](http://www.moranch.org). If you would like someone to speak to the young adults at your church about the retreat, please contact Meghan Burton.

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## NEW COVENANT CONNECTIONS

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## Making History Today

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

### Guess Who's Coming to Dinner

*"I have never let my schooling interfere with my education."*

— attributed to Mark Twain

Hendrik Willem van Loon, a Dutchman born in 1892, educated in this country, becoming an American citizen in 1919, might well have agreed with the sentiment in the quotation above. Although a college graduate (Cornell), holder of a Ph.D. (University of Munich), and author of several books, van Loon clearly understood that education could take many forms.

In *Van Loon's Lives*, written primarily for his grandchildren, he imagines hosting dinner parties with a variety of guests from different fields and who lived in different time periods. For example, he imagines having Cervantes, Shakespeare, and Moliere at his dinner table. Another dinner might have St. Francis, Hans Christian Andersen, and Amadeus Mozart, or Emily Dickinson and Frederic Chopin as guests. What a wonderful and engaging way to learn about important historical figures!

Suppose we were to do something similar with biblical figures or persons from church history. Imagine a conversation between Abraham and Paul, or between Sarah and Mary, the mother of Jesus, or between Moses, David, and Peter. Of course, to do any of this requires some digging, but what fun it would be!

Imagine 4th century theologian St. Augustine meeting the 19th century hymn writer Fanny Crosby, or the reformer Martin Luther dining with Pope Francis, or John Calvin encountering the writer Flannery O'Connor. What fascinating conversations these might be! Who would you like to invite to a dinner party? What kind of conversations

would you imagine them having? While it would be an exercise in the imagination, it would also require work on your part to construct the scene.

Presbyterians (and not only Presbyterians) have always valued education, which we have understood education in the broadest sense. It can happen in the classroom, when we travel, visit museums, or listen to music. When we venture outside our "comfort zone" we learn something about a person or an area that is new or different. Learning changes us, making us better and more interesting people.

Henry Ford once said that "history is bunk." That's true only if we forget that history is made up of interesting, fascinating people who do interesting and fascinating (and sometimes foolish!) things. History is more than dates and names and places. It's people like you and me - strange, curious, funny people.

That's why it is so much fun to learn about people! In my work with PHSSW, I read and hear about people who have made significant contributions to who we are. It helps me understand and appreciate the "why", the "where", and the "how", for good or ill. There are many saints who have much to teach us about who we are and how we as a church got to be where we are through their inspiring stories.

Yogi Berra once said, "You can observe a lot by watching." We might add "You can learn a lot by listening and digging." What might we learn from those saints who are still with us, by taking the time to listen to their experience and wisdom? We might discover something about who we are and how we got here. Maybe we could invite them over for a dinner conversation. What fun!



## Clerk's Corner

Rev. Lynn Hargrove, Stated Clerk  
Presbytery of New Covenant

Sometimes I feel a little guilty about being offered four weeks of vacation and two weeks of continuing education. I recognize that the life of a pastor is stressful, as is working in mid-council leadership. And, I admit that I have been challenged with self-care in every position I have ever held. Vacation and continuing education are ways that congregations offer care to their pastors.

I asked recently for some ideas about how people have spent their time and how they are renewed by that investment. Some also shared ideas about sabbaticals – something to which I aspire. And, then I feel guilty that not everyone has the opportunity to spend that much time away from their work.

Here is what my colleagues have shared:

*“Often times when I find myself over-working I respond to my kids’ requests to play with “in just a few minutes.” On our recent 3 1/2 week vacation, my kids would ask “can you play a game with me?” “Yes. Yes, I can.” That was fun and renewing, and what made it better was in the middle of play listening to them adapt the game in various ways - and in ways that they never could remember the next time we played. It was great!”*

*“The first of November I will be going to live in Luxor, Egypt, for two months. I have rented a room in a small building on the Nile across from the Temple of Karnak and the Valley of the Kings. I see this as a spiritual pilgrimage where I will have the opportunity to be in very ancient places not as part of a tour but as one able to spend time to be present and open to whatever experiences may come. In preparation I have learned that pilgrimages are times for self-exploration as well as renewal and wholeness. I can hardly wait!”*

*“It was summer of 2008; I participated in a writing workshop at the Collegeville Institute in beautiful MN. The Institute is a place of scholarship, worship, dialogue, and community immersed in the Benedictine rhythm of work and prayer. The summer workshops are especially designed for people who write for the purpose of sending words of faith into the world that help people grow, think, change, and heal. These weeklong workshops help public theologians (clergy and lay leaders) who, in this world of so much noise, still know that quality “words about God” (that’s theology) have a place to practice writing, hone the craft, and learn from others. The ecumenical nature of the*

*Institute means your peers come from across the country and from different branches of the Christian family tree. This occurred at a critical juncture in my ministry life, and the chance to practice the art of pen and paper in community was a difference-maker for me.”*

*“For the past two years I have attended the Festival of Homiletics, a week-long preaching event sponsored by Lutheran Seminary. This year, in San Antonio, I saw a few colleagues from this presbytery in attendance. There are many opportunities for worship and preaching workshops, featuring some of the best in the field.”*

A colleague told me about Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs, which seek to enhance and sustain the quality of ministry in American congregations. These programs provide an opportunity for pastors to step away briefly from the persistent obligations of daily parish life and to engage in a period of renewal and reflection. Renewal periods are not vacations but times for intentional exploration and reflection, for drinking again from God’s life-giving waters, for regaining enthusiasm and creativity for ministry. In 2017, grants of up to \$50,000 were offered, a portion of which was for the congregation to pay for someone while the pastor was away. For more information, check out: <http://www.cpx.cts.edu/renewal> It could be good for both your pastor and your congregation!

## Webster PC and McWhirter Elementary

Webster Presbyterian loves the children at McWhirter Elementary, our neighborhood school. At July’s “Summer Spotlight”, students (pre-K-5th) can come to the church for two nutritious meals and days filled with reading, math, science, culture, and LOTS of fun! Also, each child receives the books that they read to build their own, personal libraries. The children love it so much that, when they age out, they come back as volunteers!

All of our programs are coordinated with our partner, Communities-in-Schools. Throughout the school year, members offer gifts of time and service to help keep supplies organized and ready to go when the need arises. Every spring, we provide food and financial contributions for food-insecure families to take home during Spring break, ensuring that our children do not go hungry. Every summer, members go shopping for school supplies and back

packs, to ensure that every child has the necessary tools for learning in the classroom. We provide funds for other needs that arise during the school year.

Christmas always is the most fun. Through “Gifts of Joy,” we provide Christmas presents—including items of clothing and something from the children’s wish lists—for 160 students. Parents come to the church to pick up the items chosen with love for their children while the kids enjoy cookies and play time with volunteers. Wrapping paper completes the package!



# Mary's Musings

Mary Marcotte, Associate General Presbyter  
Presbytery of New Covenant

It's that time of year again when Sunday newspaper ads are full of school supplies, marching band camps are in session, football workouts in sweltering heat are on the horizon, and families are trying to squeeze in some last days of summer fun before school begins. Churches, too are making their plans for a new church school year with kick-off event planning as well as recruiting and training teachers and leaders and thinking about what curriculum will be used and how to entice more people to participate.

I've recently received a 'beta test' version of a self-scoring survey on elements contributing to Congregational Spiritual Vitality that has been developed by our national staff in the office of Theology, Formation and Evangelism. It identifies 70 markers for spiritual vitality that cross 7 areas. Number one set of indicators is lifelong Christian formation.

**What are these listed Christian formation markers?** While the underlined statements are from the discernment tool, the comments are my reflections.

Would you say your congregation emphasizes...

- An intentional plan for lifelong faith formation or discipleship - Is there an expectation that members of all ages and experience levels can and should continue to grow in the depth and breadth of their experience of discipleship? Are there entry point opportunities for adults who feel less than proficient in their knowledge and practice of the faith?
- Bible study - Are there opportunities to not only know scattered stories but to wrestle with the texts for what they

reveal about the nature of God, the message to the people at the time of their writing and the message for us today? Does Bible study focus on both head and heart knowledge? Are participants encouraged to find their story in the great narrative of scripture?

- Christian Education for all ages - Does the Sunday morning worship and study schedule encourage full congregational participation in both worship and study? Is attention paid to age level needs of children and youth, life stage needs of adults, identifying contemporary issues with which members struggle or where they may be called to be an advocate?
- Prayer circles, chains, prayer walks and prayer partners - Is this a praying congregation? Are varied prayer practices readily visible in the life of the church and is there intentionality in teaching these practices?
- Teaching or practicing stewardship throughout the year - Is stewardship understood as a life practice that responds with gratitude to the generosity of God? Is stewardship understood as a spiritual discipline rather than a business practice?
- Other activities to engage in or learn about spiritual disciplines - Are there opportunities for service, testimony, acts of compassion and justice, etc.? Is there attention paid to helping individuals reflect on what they

have learned from these experiences and how they contribute to changing the lives and hearts of both those who engage in the practices and those who are touched by them?

*Does this congregation...*

- Challenge its members to become more Christ-like - Is Jesus consistently held forth as the perfect representation of what it mean to live in deep relationship with and obedience to the will of God? Can members articulate what it means to live in the way of Jesus as they love God and neighbor?
- Emphasize Sabbath-keeping as a priority - Is delight in the Lord and rest and renewal valued? Does the church provide strategies to help overly scheduled children, youth, and adults make intentional choices to pursue joy and peace resting in the promises of God?
- Have a strong culture of generosity - Is there trust in the providence of God? Is there a mindset of God's abundance rather than a drumbeat of scarcity? Are learners of all ages encouraged to bless others even as they have been blessed themselves?
- Help their members apply their faith to everyday life - Is faith integral to everyday life? Are members encouraged to theologize before they moralize? Can evidence of relevance to all of life be seen?

How might your church score? Are your Yes affirmations enthusiastic or tepid? What steps might you take to intentionally build these congregational spiritual vitality indicators into your planning, publicity, and practice during the coming year?

Interested in the entire tool? Email me at [mmarcotte@pbyofnewcovenant.org](mailto:mmarcotte@pbyofnewcovenant.org) to receive a copy.

## Youth Spiritual Pilgrimage



Visiting the Martin Luther King Center

Many among us are deeply concerned by a national climate of intolerance, racism, and hatred that is threatening to undo so much of the progress accomplished by the Civil Rights movement. Thus, the youth of St. Thomas and St. Philip embarked on a Spiritual Pilgrimage through the South to teach youth about the sinful history of racial oppression in the South; to study the brave individuals and congregations who furthered the Civil Rights movement as an expression of their Christian faith; and to pursue the work of reconciliation and repentance that God is still calling forth.

To accomplish this, we combined prayer, education, and conversation around sites of the South which have played a role in the Civil Rights movement. Our hope is that these visits will empower youth to be active participants in racial reconciliation efforts in America, and especially, catalysts for this conversation and work in the Church.

On our pilgrimage, we visited the following locations, groups, and persons:

- the Whitney Plantation in Louisiana
- the Triple S Mart where Alton Sterling was killed
- Together Baton Rouge, a grassroots organization
- 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, AL
- the Civil Rights Institute in Birmingham, AL
- conversation on the power of social movements with David Lamotte
- conversation with Heath Rada
- Ebenezer Baptist Church and the King Center in Atlanta, GA
- the Center for Civil and Human Rights in Atlanta, GA
- the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, AL

While journeying to and between these places and people, youth took time to reflect on their experiences in writing, which they have contributed to our travel blog. Here are some of their reflections on the pilgrimage:

“I found the exhibit [at the Civil Rights Institute in Birmingham] on student marches inspiring because it

showcased the power and bravery of young people and the importance of students (even our age) in the Civil Rights Movement. To see that youth were an integral part of the movement was powerful.” -Margaret Fair, 16, St. Philip Presbyterian.

“Walking into 16th Street Baptist Church, I didn’t know much except for what little I’d seen in the movie Selma. Our guide, a church member, talked to us about the heinous crime and the men who did it. One main thing that appalled me was the fact that the men were not convicted for their crime until many years later. I saw the Holy Spirit working in the church members when they spoke about the crime. They were hurt, but they still believed that God was with them the whole way through, which I loved.” -Darlene Moreno, 15, St. Thomas Presbyterian.

“Feelings I had on the tour [of the Whitney Plantation] were sadness, lividness, and the constant question of ‘Why us, Lord?’ As an African-American, to have the knowledge that my people went through a horrible and tragic thing for hundreds of years, gives me hope that I can do anything. My people could not only overcome this, but become stronger and strive. I know that I can do anything and be fearless in anything I aspire to achieve.” -Blair Curley, 14, St. Thomas Presbyterian.

To see more photos and additional reflections by youth, visit [www.saintsonpilgrimage.blogspot.com](http://www.saintsonpilgrimage.blogspot.com)



Walking across the Edmund Pettus Bridge

### 2017 Presbytery Meeting

Saturday, November 18  
at Northwoods PC in Houston

### Next Connections Copy Deadline

The next deadline is Tuesday, October 10 for the November/December 2017 issue. Send articles and photos to Lynn Hargrove at [lhargrove@pbyofnewcovenant.org](mailto:lhargrove@pbyofnewcovenant.org).

# community news & highlights

CONGREGATIONAL INVOLVEMENT

## Brenham Presbyterian Church: Education and Outreach

For the past six years one of the core ministries of Brenham Presbyterian Church (BPC) has been a partnership with an afterschool program for elementary school students, known as *Mission Brenham Leadership Academy* (MBLA). Meeting four times

a week after school, this multiracial



low income program called our Fellowship Hall and outdoor playground "home". Here kids found a safe place to grow in both academics and faith Utilizing student teachers from Blinn College, volunteers from BPC and other area churches, the

program combined individual public school tutoring, with worship, Bible stories, fun, and positive self-image development. For many, this was the daily encounter of themselves as children of God, and often the only regular encounter with the living grace of Jesus Christ.

Though this program has come to an end, BPC continues to combine education and outreach. Indeed, MBLA's diversity influenced our participation in community ecumenical events of education and inter-religious dialogue, and our Wednesday night worship/ study group which this year focuses upon education about world religions and interfaith dialogue.

## First Presbyterian Church, Conroe: Preschool Blessings

The congregation of Conroe, First, is blessed by its relationship with their pre-school. Church members are visibly working to support the school. Gardening is part of the school curriculum. The gardens have been around for a long time, and are maintained by a church member. "Farmer Paul" encourages the kids to get their hands dirty as they prepare the soil and then plant the seeds. Later he helps them to harvest their plentiful crops. School families and staff are blessed through the work of this church member.

The school also supports the congregation. The new Kindergarten Choir came from the relationship between the Directors of Music Ministries, Christian Education, and our Preschool. The choir participates in special school events, including



First PC preschool children.

performances for their families. A couple of times a year, they perform special music as part of our 11 AM casual worship service. A video of the performance is used the next week at the early service. FPC's congregation is blessed by the work of the PDS.

While there may be minor difficulties in sharing space, our staff, church members, and school families are able to work together and to support each other which benefits and blesses everyone.

## Pines PC: Team up with Sherwood Elementary

Pines Presbyterian has been involved with a Sherwood Elementary since 1994 through the "Adopt a School Program". Sherwood, a Title 1 school, is home to almost 500 students, with close to 70% participation in the reduced-cost / free lunch program.

On the first Saturday in August,



Sherwood Elementary

more than 50 Pines volunteers repaired and beautified the campus for "Back to School".

Projects include landscaping, building cabinets, cleaning and painting the playground, painting class room walls and hallways, building a storage house for bikes and toys, along with packing back packs with school supplies.

The relationship continues through the school year, by tutoring and mentoring students, and providing school supplies, clothing, Thanksgiving and Christmas meals, holiday gifts and notes of encouragement. Church members provide yearly staff appreciation luncheons for the teachers and administration.

The support continues over the summer. A rising senior provided 130 lunches each Tuesday in June as a service project. Boxes of cereal are delivered to these same children who need a healthy meal. The students know that the Pines family is cheering them on year round.

Over 24 years, we have built relationships and shared God's love with our neighborhood children who have accepted God's grace and presence in their lives.

## St. Luke's Presbyterian Church: Longfellow Elementary

In an attempt to reach out to our community and to further one of the foundations of any community, the education of children, we at St. Luke's partner with Longfellow Elementary in many different ways. We have people who mentor at the school and also have participated in the Real Men Read program.

Our favorite activity that shows our support of the school is our annual Teacher Appreciation Luncheon. On the Friday before school starts, we invite all the staff of Longfellow over for a sit down luncheon. Gift cards are given to teachers and school supplies are shared to be used in classrooms. Marvin Gaspard, our talented Music

Director, has even written their school song which is sung before every luncheon with Marvin accompanying piano. This year will be our tenth year in celebrating these educators and their gifts with which they bless our community and we at St. Luke's feel honored to be a part of celebrating all that they do for the children in their care.



Teacher Appreciation Luncheon

## St. Thomas Presbyterian Church: Partnering with Harbor School

St. Thomas Presbyterian Church sits at the intersection of two Houston communities. Located on Memorial Drive, just west of Kirkwood Drive, the church is nestled in a community with large suburban homes. And yet, just as close to St. Thomas PC, is a community of families who are more working class than middle class, more paycheck-to-paycheck than comfortable savings, more rent than mortgage. There are families struggling to get by, and working harder than ever to break the cycle of poverty.

For over two years, St. Thomas has been discerning how to help these families to become more self-reliant and break the cycle of poverty. We are partnering with Harbor School to open an early childhood education center on our campus this fall/winter.



The school assists at-risk children and families navigate toward a strong future by providing high quality early childhood education in a Christian environment. From our perspective, the Harbor School is the missing critical need in our neighborhood, by providing services at a fraction of what typical child care costs. As the PCUSA Co-Moderator Jan Edmiston puts it, it's "what is breaking God's heart in our neighborhood."

## Pinecrest Youth Employment Program



Pinecrest youth receive certificates

The Pinecrest Youth Employment Program was begun almost forty years ago. The mission is to provide job skills and finances for necessary supplies for the upcoming school year. The youths work 24 hours per week over six weeks. Our goal this year was to provide a stipend of \$150.00 per week to each youth. The program is open to youth in the community. Pinecrest Presbyterian Church is located in Fifth Ward, Houston, Texas, just east of downtown. This low-income community is made up of Hispanics and Blacks.

In 2017, we had 10 youth to participate in and complete the program at 8 different job sites. It is important to place the youth in a nurturing environment that is willing to provide job skills and develop the individual. The program coordinator assists the youth with issues they may have, in order to perform successfully in their job.

The Youth Employment Program is one of the largest outreach ministries of the church. We appreciate the financial support from Northwoods, ChristChurch-Bellaire, Pines, St. Philip, and the presbytery.

### What are you doing for the holidays?

The next issue of *Connections* will focus on Holiday Outreach. Send your articles to Lynn Hargrove, [lhargrove@pbhofnewcovenant.org](mailto:lhargrove@pbhofnewcovenant.org) by October 10

# mission & ministry

UNITED CAMPUS MINISTRIES

## UCM Houston

United Campus Ministries of Greater Houston appreciates your support and prayers. We are gearing up for a new program year and want to solicit your prayers but also your help as we continue to prepare, equip, and inform students and faculty on college campuses. We will continue our tradition of hosting two Wednesday lunches for students per semester. This program year we have added a Soul Sunday Dinner meal that focuses on a more intimate setting helping to foster long term fellowship among students.



These dinners will take place weekly beginning on Sunday, August 20th through April 29th from 7pm-9pm. Dinners will take place only while classes are in session. We are seeking congregations to provide hot meals for a group of 20 students on Sunday evenings. In addition to our new Sunday Dinner opportunity, we are launching our mission control room located in our student lounge. This room will offer students a chance to find community service projects to volunteer and get involved in. If your church has a mission project that you'd like to share we'd love to get our students connected. For more information on how to connect with UCM on any of these opportunities please contact Rev. Tami Nelson, our Executive Director 832-326-5115 or Stephen Cottingham, our Director of Student Ministries 972-965-2683. You can also email us at [ucmhouston@gmail.com](mailto:ucmhouston@gmail.com).

## UCM Medical Center

Reaching out to the many students in the Texas Medical Center is a challenge, with schools for doctors, dentists, nurses and other medical

## UCM Aggieland: Campus Ministry of the PC(USA) and United Church of Christ at Texas A&M University

Did you know that every Wednesday during the fall and spring semesters at Texas A&M from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. the UCM students host a Peanut Butter Fellowship on the Texas A&M campus? Peanut Butter Fellowship is our primary mission



Peanut butter fellowship

and service with Texas A&M students. We provide lunch, prayer, and fellowship for any student who stops by our tables. In September 2016, the UCM leadership made a slight change in location that allowed for greater shade and more outdoor seating areas. As a result of the change in location - combined with social media presence, word of mouth, and prayer - our Peanut Butter Fellowship grew from 30 to 160 last year. In addition to Peanut Butter Fellowship, UCM also hosts weekly, student-led bible studies as well as a weekly Aggie Supper that offers students at Texas A&M and Blinn College opportunities for spiritual growth, faith exploration, and fun fellowship.

On July 19, four United Campus Ministry students - (from l. to r.) Kayla Carpin, Johanna Krauter, Anaelli Rodriguez, and Zachary Southard - traveled to Peru as part of the First Presbyterian Church of Bryan's mission team. While in Quillabamba,



Peru Mission Trip

Peru, the mission team attended the dedication for the Instituto Superior de Teologica. First Presbyterian's mission team has partnered with the people of Peru for many years, and in addition to attending the dedication, the mission team members will assist in building a kitchen for Instituto Superior de Teologica.

UCM kicks off the new fall semester during Texas A&M's Howdy Week with a special Peanut Butter Fellowship on Friday, August 25 from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the Texas A&M Academic Plaza. This fall, we will also finalize plans to attend the 2018 College Conference at Montreat where we will welcome all Texas college students - even those not enrolled at Texas A&M University or Blinn College - to join us. For more information, please contact the Rev. Amy Klinkovsky at [campusminister@aggieucm.org](mailto:campusminister@aggieucm.org). And, to learn more about UCM in Aggieland, visit [www.aggieucm.org](http://www.aggieucm.org) or follow AggieUCM on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter.

professionals. Rev. Dr. Nathan Carlin meets monthly for Bible study and prayer. He also leads writing workshops for students on grief and patient care. Often this leads to one-on-one pastoral care conversations as students process their feelings around what they are

learning. This is in addition to his full time position at the University of Texas Health Science Center where he directs the Medical Humanities and Ethics Certification program. To find out more, contact Nathan at [Nathan.Carlin@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:Nathan.Carlin@uth.tmc.edu).

## Church Connection is Important to Schreiner University



Schreiner University, Kerrville, TX.

Schreiner University, in the beautiful Hill Country, was founded in 1923 through the efforts of rancher and businessman Charles Schreiner and the Presbyterian Synod of Texas. The church-school relationship continues in a covenant agreement with the Synod of the Sun of the PC(USA).

Dr. Charlie McCormick, our new president, has a vision that includes academic vigor and opportunity for the 1,300-plus students, who come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. Students can participate in learning communities, sports, international travel, volunteer projects and many student organizations.

Campus Ministry, one of the most active campus organizations, is led by the Rev. Gini Norris-Lane. It supports

student worship, prayer groups and Bible study (denominational and non-denominational), leadership programs, service projects and international travel. The Exodus Project is a Christian leadership community for freshmen who study, worship, serve and retreat together during their first year on campus. Coordinated by Kelsey Penn, the Purposeful Lives program provides students with opportunities to engage in service projects locally, nationally, and globally. Over spring break this year, seven students went to southern Louisiana to help residents rebuild after deadly flooding there. Purposeful Lives is an integral part of the Schreiner Experience, “to prepare students for meaningful work and purposeful lives in a changing global society.”

Many Schreiner graduates have entered theological seminaries, then served the church as pastors and in other capacities. The Christian Vocations Intern Program, directed by Judy Ferguson, provides partnership opportunities for the university and congregations to develop professional leadership. Schreiner graduate Jasiel Hernandez is now at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. His education was made possible by the Pan American-Schreiner Agreement (PASA)—a special scholarship available to graduates of the Presbyterian preparatory school in Kingsville. PASA scholarships are made possible by gifts from churches and individuals throughout the region.

In fall 2017, Campus Ministry will move into the Sam Junkin Campus Ministry Center. In addition to space for worship, weddings, speakers and performances in a refurbished auditorium, new facilities will include the Campus Ministry offices, a 24-hour prayer room, meeting space and counseling rooms.

For more information about Schreiner University, contact Rita Odom, church relations specialist, at [rodom@schreiner.edu](mailto:rodom@schreiner.edu) or phone 830-792-7464.

## Happy New Year!

By Rev. Angie Mabry-Nauta, PPAS Development and Marketing Coordinator

The sounds of students broke the sleepy summer silence at **Presbyterian Pan American School** (PPAS or Pan Am) in Kingsville, Texas on August 7. Where a language barrier might limit greetings’ words, broken and heavily accented English, smiles, handshakes, and hugs get the message across: “I am glad to see you!”

Youth grades 9 – 12 and their families choose Pan Am for many

reasons, most commonly for the rigorous academics, the option for dual-credit courses; the international community, and faith development.

“We are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools,” says Rev. Dr. Doug Dalglish, PPAS President. “Our students are prepared well for college. They are ready for the educational and social next steps needed for higher education by the time they leave our campus.”

Worship and spiritual life are at the center of Pan Am community life. Students through the Campus Ministry Council (CMC), lead both.

They prayerfully plan services, Bible studies, and a variety of events designed to help each teen grow in her or his relationship with God.

Presbyterian Pan American School is an international, and co-educational Christian college-preparatory school. Developing and empowering young people for global Christian leadership, PPAS was founded in 1912.



35 new students began their first year Aug. 7.

# events and happenings



**September 4** – Labor Day  
Presbytery Office is Closed

**September 9/October 14**  
PYCC Regular Meeting  
Presbytery Center

**September 11**  
Facing Racism Conversations  
Woodlands Community PC

**September 14**  
Fresh Elastic  
Presbytery Center

**September 15**  
Church Women United  
Presbytery Center

**September 16/October 5**  
Healthy Boundaries Training  
Presbytery Office

**September 17**  
90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Bethel, Angleton

**September 24**  
Paul Kucera's Installation  
Bethel, West Columbia

**September 27-31**  
Administrative Personnel  
Association  
Southwest Region Conference  
First PC, Dallas

**October 10**  
*Connections* copy deadline

**October 15-16**  
SCRAPCE Enneagram  
Conference  
Austin Seminary

**October 19**  
Interface-Samaritan Luncheon  
River Oaks Country Club

**October 21**  
Vital Signs Workshop  
Northwoods, Houston

**October 28**  
Youth Confirmation Rally  
St. Philip, Houston

## Fresh Elastic for Stretched-Out Educators



### Connect! Parents as Faith-Nurturers

*Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.*

Parents are the single most important influence on the spiritual lives of children. How can the church equip parents for their critical role as faith-nurturers? This workshop offers a model called *Connect*, a three-week series for parents and young children involving parent education components covering child faith development, rituals and traditions, church seasons, and questions kids ask. A description of the model, handouts for adaptation, and resources for supporting families in nurturing faith at home will be included.



Jenna Campbell

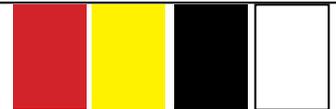
We welcome our presenter, Jenna Campbell. She is the Director of Children and Youth Ministry at First Presbyterian Church in Stillwater, OK. Jenna is a Certified Christian Educator and holds a Master's Degree in Christian Education from Union Presbyterian Seminary.

If you are a volunteer, paid staff person, teaching elder or just curious, you are invited, **Thursday, September 14, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.** at the Presbytery Center, 1110 Lovett Blvd., Houston. 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](mailto:anne.aiko.wilson@gmail.com) by Monday morning, September 11.

This session will be facilitated by folks with a seasoned heart for education. Please feel free to contact any one of them if you have questions.

Jo Ann Currie ([jjcurrie5152@gmail.com](mailto:jjcurrie5152@gmail.com)) Kim Shrull ([kshrull@earthlink.net](mailto:kshrull@earthlink.net))  
Connie Nyquist ([lnyquist@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lnyquist@sbcglobal.net)) Anne Wilson ([anne.aiko.wilson@gmail.com](mailto:anne.aiko.wilson@gmail.com))

## Unity and Diversity: Conversations about Racism



Woodlands Community PC will host discussions about Racism this fall on five consecutive Monday evenings starting **September 11, 18, and 25, and October 2 and 9** from 7:00-8:00 p.m. These sessions will provide an opportunity to:

1. See how the Bible teaches us to embrace diversity and promote justice
2. Look at some of the history of our denomination's dealing with this issue
3. Discuss the historical and ongoing negative legacy of racism in this country
4. Consider how our faith community can work towards reconciliation.

The sessions will include presentations and small- and large-group discussions at the WCPC campus at 4881 W. Panther Creek Dr. in The Woodlands. Everyone is welcome to come learn, discuss, and share light refreshments. Childcare will be provided for the first session, and by reservation for the following ones. If you have questions, contact Nancy Hathaway at 281-367-8792.

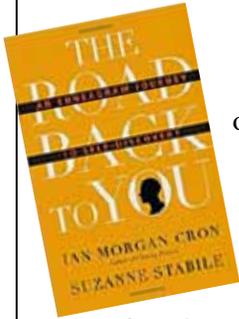
We look forward to seeing you at these sessions as WCPC strives to live into its call to be "An Inclusive Church Family: Loving, Sharing, and Serving Christ."

# events and happenings

## SAVE THE DATE!

### “Know Your Number”

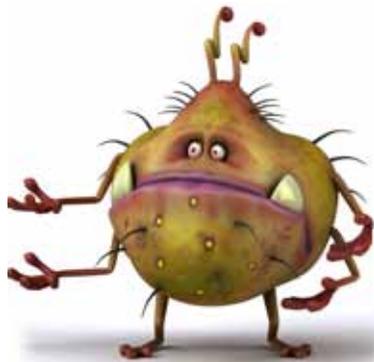
An Enneagram workshop led by  
Suzanne Stabile



The wisdom of the Enneagram can help take you further along into who you really are. *Know Your Number* is a foundational course and is the first step in working with the Enneagram. This SCRAPCE Workshop will be held **October 16-17, 2017** at Austin Seminary. Watch for more information and registration to come, [austinseminary.edu/EBW](http://austinseminary.edu/EBW).

## BEAT THE BUG

Flu season is around the corner. Flu vaccines will be available at the Presbytery Center, 1110 Lovett Blvd., Houston, on **Tuesday, October 3**, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Bring your insurance information with you and beat the big bad bug! Flu shots are provided by Randall's Pharmacy.



**Randalls**

## PINECREST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH INVITES YOU FOR A WOMEN'S DAY WEEKEND



“Women Walking by Faith” - Healing of the Spirit, Soul and Body will be held on **Saturday, September 9 and Sunday, September 10** at Pinecrest PC, 4913 Market, Houston. On Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. there will be a FREE Women's Health Screening, lunch is provided and the opportunity to visit a variety of vendors. On Sunday, at 11:00 a.m. worship with keynote speaker Sebrina Sinegal, fellowship to follow. For more information, call the church at 713-673-0552.



## Seasons of Caring Luncheon

For more than 40 years Interface-Samaritan Counseling Centers has encouraged human development by providing faith-sensitive counseling and educational services from a Christian perspective to anyone who asks. Based on the belief that our physical, mental, and spiritual health are interdependent, Interface-Samaritan helps adults, children, and families realize their potential for full and productive lives, enabling our faith-centered approach to provide an additional dimension to the healing process. Join us for the 18th annual Seasons of Caring Luncheon, **Thursday, October 19** at the River Oaks Country Club. To learn more about this event, contact Melinda Guthrie, Director of Development (713)626-7990, ext. 107; or visit us online to learn more about our extensive services, therapists and locations [www.interface-samaritan.org](http://www.interface-samaritan.org).



## “Have you had your Annual Spiritual Yet?”

Join us for a Day of Renewal entitled, “Have You Had Your Annual Spiritual?” on **Saturday, October 21, 2017** from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. at Northwoods Presbyterian Church, 3320 Cypress Creek Parkway, Houston. With the guidance of guest minister, Rev. Dr. Tom Tewell. The cost is \$15 per person or \$30 per family, which includes box lunches. Contact Northwoods PC at 281-444-8861 or register online at [Northwoods.org](http://Northwoods.org) and scroll down to ‘Upcoming Events’. To inquire about scholarships, email [nicole@northwoods.org](mailto:nicole@northwoods.org).



# STOP Human Trafficking

## A Little Goes a Long Way: A Few Add Up to a Lot

How is it possible that we have slaves living and suffering among us in the United States in 2017? Yet it is happening in sickening numbers all around us. Human trafficking is an ugly, growing business that enslaves and abuses people for profit. The victims include young girls and women, boys and men. Human trafficking ruins lives, and its scars are never entirely erased from victims.

Fortunately for Montgomery and Harris counties and beyond, The Phoenix Charity works to free and rehabilitate human trafficking victims. After rescue, they coordinate with law enforcement and safe houses for victims' physical and psychological recovery, remove tattoos and other marks of possession, and encourage these precious people as they seek freedom and survival from their horrific ordeal. Phoenix is a leader in human trafficking education within our communities and political action initiatives.

Recently, the First Presbyterian Church of Conroe received a grant from the presbytery to help The Phoenix Charity in its work with trafficking victims.

Members of the church continue support

through the "Sisterly Love Bag" project. Bags are made from pre-owned t-shirts, and filled with "survival" hygiene products.

The Phoenix Charity, located in the Woodlands, can be contacted at 832-930-2690.



Grant check received.

# Weekday Ministries Conference: We've come a long way

Back to school! New school supplies, new clothes, excitement in the air! What a responsibility teachers have as they welcome new families to their classrooms!

In the early 1980s, members of the Presbytery of New Covenant recognized the need for high quality teacher training and the Weekday Ministries Conference was born. Originally, the conference was designed for teachers and staff in Presbyterian preschools and day care programs throughout the Presbytery and for the first few years, the conference was held in various churches in Houston. However, word of this wonderful conference soon spread and directors and teachers from early childhood programs in other denominations were asking to be included. By the mid -1990s, Grace Presbyterian, First Presbyterian and Memorial Drive Presbyterian were the only churches large enough to house the growing numbers of participants. Memorial Drive hosted the conference for many years, but by 2012, the number of participants had grown to over 900 and it was time to find a new home. The conference was moved to The Westchase Marriott Hotel.

This year there were 1084 people registered. The participants came from 100 schools and other early childhood programs in Houston and the surrounding area as well as Galveston, Austin, Orange, Woodville and Rustin, La. In addition, there were 41 presenters and keynote speakers teaching sessions and 28 vendors

Thanks to the Presbytery, hundreds of teachers have had the opportunity to learn about curriculum, classroom management, child development, faith development and much more. Directors have connected with their peers for support and information and have kept up-to-date on state licensing



standards and other administrative issues. The training received by these educators has impacted many thousands of children's lives.

The state of Texas requires that all teachers have a minimum of 24 hours of continuing education each year; directors are required to have 30 hours. The Presbyterian Weekday Ministries Conference offers 18 of these hours given by well-qualified presenters.

Edith Stiner, former Presbytery staff member, worked on behalf of the conference for many years and Carrie Walker has continued that work. Among Carrie's contributions are: handling the contracts with the hotel, making travel arrangements for the keynote speakers, designing the brochure, acting as registrar, making sure handouts are printed and information is posted on the website and working closely with the volunteer co-chairs of the conference committee. She is an invaluable resource!

Everyone involved with the conference is so very grateful to the Presbytery for all its support throughout the years. This is truly a wonderful and much-needed ministry.