



connections

Newsletter of the Presbytery of New Covenant

Growing congregations that passionately engage their community to make disciples.

Revisions to the Reconciliation and Dismissal Procedure

By **RE Mort McPhail**
MEMBER OF GENERAL COUNCIL

At its meeting in November, presbytery approved a motion from General Council to withdraw the pending motion introduced at the July meeting concerning revisions to the Reconciliation and Dismissal Procedure. The General Council then moved consideration of an alternative revised procedure for first reading with debate and vote to be held March 2015, thus re-starting the revision process.

The reason for starting again was that in the interim since July, the staff and writing team hosted five listening meetings which were attended by both Ruling and Teaching Elders from all over the presbytery. The team also received emails from many describing both concerns and suggestions for revision. In all, over 120 unique comments were logged. Every comment was carefully considered, and the writing team sought to incorporate as many as possible into a more thorough and far-reaching revised procedure. Of course, not all of the suggestions were adopted. In some cases, they would have introduced inconsistencies within the overall document; in others, the spirit of the concern was

addressed in different ways.

In describing the most important changes in the original introduction of the revised procedure, the writing team identified three primary considerations:

1. They took seriously the issue of reconciliation and included language and steps to strengthen that focus and to encourage the necessary discussions both before and after a congregation had entered the process.
2. They pointed out that the presbytery has particular duties and responsibilities under the *Book of Order* to the PC(USA). Language was added to clarify that the presbytery must and will take a stand on issues related to our polity. The presbytery does not stand outside of the process as a disinterested observer.
3. They clarified the financial language in an effort to increase the extent to which a congregation would be able to understand more clearly the costs of the decision that it is considering in order to reduce the element of surprise as well as to clarify the intent of the procedure.

All of these changes remain in the

document that was introduced in November. However, the changes now being considered are more extensive and complex than those initially presented. In addition to the original issues, the primary changes included in the proposed revision now before the presbytery include the following (among many more minor revisions):

1. The role of Discernment Teams was expanded beyond listening and reporting. The teams will have more active roles in the management of the process, including oversight to ensure fairness and balance in hearing from the widest possible array of viewpoints and participation in the entire process.
2. The most complicated issues raised were those regarding the legality of the procedure under our polity. The focus of the concern was whether the *Book of Order* allows for a vote to request dismissal at a congregational meeting. The language in the *Book of Order* regarding congregational meetings is to be interpreted as being exclusive and a vote to be dismissed is not included among those things that may properly be taken up at

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Dear friends in Christ,

In going from the celebration of Emmanuel to beginning a new year, the words of Howard Thurman sound in my soul for us all:

*When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,*

The WORK of CHRISTMAS begins:

*To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among people,
To make music in the heart.*

Serving as your moderator this year, I look forward to our calling and ministry together as the Presbytery of New Covenant in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*In the peace of Christ,
Dr. Laurey Hartwell Murphy, TE
Spring Branch PC, Houston*

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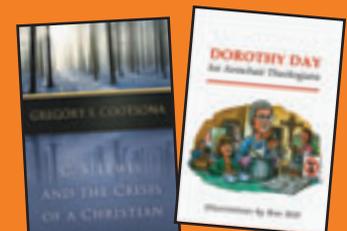
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NEW COVENANT CONNECTIONS

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From the Cole Mine

Rev. Mike Cole, General Presbyter
Presbytery of New Covenant

“It’s Simply Too Complex”

One of the first things I learned in conflict management is that conflict rarely results from simple issues and that in order to understand the full dynamics of a conflict one must “complexify” not simplify the issues.

That attempt to “complexify” the issues of Israel/Palestine was a substantial part of the reason for a group of ten Presbyterians and six Jews to travel together to Israel/Palestine in November. This was not an ordinary Holy Land tour; it was an intensive exposure to a wide range of perspectives on the concerns and issues in a land deemed Holy by three major religions that is besieged by unholy behavior.

During our week in Israel, we had extensive dialogue with individuals representing a wide spectrum of viewpoints: an ordinary Palestinian farmer with an extraordinary vision of creating peace on his land, an IDF Colonel, a Rabbi for Human Rights, an editor of the Times of Israel, the Supreme Judge and Religious Advisor to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, a Palestinian Lutheran Pastor, a settler in Gush Etzion (the scene of several recent incidents of violence against Israelis), a Palestinian Episcopal Priest, the Director of Hand in Hand School, and a Roman Catholic nun running a center for interfaith dialogue in Old Jerusalem. To say that we heard a broad range of views would be an understatement.

Our conversations with others and among ourselves were rich, energizing, frustrating, exhausting, hopeful, unsettling, and challenging all at once. With each person with whom we met I found myself thinking, “I can understand that perspective,” and at the same time “How can he/she possibly believe that?” Everyone offered a different analysis of what “the” problem is and what “the” solution is and most were

fairly convincing....until we met with the next person, whose “problem” and “solution” seemed equally reasonable.

On our last night in Tel Aviv, we met and did actually reach our own conclusion: The issues, concerns and realities are simply too complex for us to fully comprehend and far too intricate for us to have the audacity to offer a “solution,” especially if it is a simple one. It is as if the whole world suffers from farsightedness when it comes to Israel/Palestine—from a distance everything seems so clear, but when we get up close everything becomes fuzzier and fuzzier. There are no simple solutions. There are no absolute “good guys” and “bad guys.” Everyone is already a part of the problem and needs to be a part of the solution.

Our best role as hyperopic outsiders is to encourage peace and mutual respect in ways that do not villainize one side as the epitome of evil and praise the other as the embodiment of sanctity. That’s why our visit to the Hand in Hand School in Jerusalem anchored our trip - <http://www.handinhandk12.org/>. This is a school for pre-K through 12th grade with 630 students, half of whom are Jews and half of whom are Palestinian (Muslim and Christian). The elementary classes are team taught by a Jew and a Palestinian in Hebrew and Arabic. The students learn not only basic subjects but also engage in dialogue on difficult topics to help them understand one another’s perspectives. For instance, Israel’s Independence Day is celebrated by Jews but not so much by Palestinians. The students discuss why this is so and how it affects them and their families. The school also organizes fellowship and discussion opportunities for the parents and extended families of the students to extend mutual respect beyond the classroom. It was wonderful to sit in a classroom with two seventh grade students (one a

Jew and one a Muslim) and listen to them talk about how “normal” it is for Jews, Muslims, and Christians to be together and how they get together even outside of school activities. This is a place of enormous hope for the future and the school is attracting a lot of attention.

The attention has been both good and bad. Hand in Hand School was the only school in Jerusalem selected to personally meet with the Pope on his visit last May. Political leaders from across the spectrum have visited the school and endorsed its system of learning and mutual respect. But the “haters” in the community have also taken notice and sprayed hateful anti-Arab graffiti on the walls of the school. On the last weekend in November, arsonists set fire to two classrooms and sprayed graffiti on the school. But rather than react in fear or anger, the students and parents have rallied to show that love, not hate wins in God’s world by holding signs that say, “Jews and Arabs refuse to be enemies.” On the Monday after the arson, the following sign appeared at the school, posted by community members: “We are ashamed of racism and violence and happy that your school is here.”

While the world has relied on diplomats and politicians to resolve the differences in such a complex country, a school full of little children is leading them to a place where even wolves and lambs shall live peaceably together. Maybe the simple solution offered in Isaiah 11:6 is the right solution, after all.

In Christ,

Revisions to the Reconciliation and Dismissal Procedure

Revisions from page 1

a congregational meeting. New language has been introduced that describes the action as an “advisory vote” requested by the session. At a congregational consultation, an advisory vote may be taken to inform the presbytery, through the session, of the congregation’s desire to be dismissed to another Reformed denomination. Under the *Book of Order*, it is the responsibility of the presbytery to vote to dismiss a congregation. A congregation may make known to session and to the presbytery its desire to be dismissed through such a vote, but neither the session nor the congregation may take the action on its own without the approval of the presbytery.

Because of the procedure adopted for the vote taken at presbytery meetings to date, the presbytery been acting properly in all of the cases that have come to it so far. In every case, the presbytery has taken two votes: 1) to approve that the process was followed, and 2) to vote to dismiss the congregation at issue to another Reformed body. The changes introduced in this revision incorporate appropriate language to codify this process into our stated procedure.

3. Another complex concern arose regarding the length of time required before a second congregational vote could occur,

should a first vote fail. Many of those attending the conversations expressed concerns for the emotional hurt that occurs in a divided congregation and discussed the length of time needed to reconcile and reestablish trust. The revision seeks to address these concerns without becoming overly restrictive by specifying a period of “at least three years,” which would allow a full turnover in the members of a session.

Going through the process of listening and discussion was extremely helpful to the writing team. It was living proof of our Reformed belief that we work, think, pray, and discern God’s will better together than we do apart. The team thinks that this revision is a better and more complete revision to the existing procedures. The document is available on the presbytery website, www.pbyofnewcovenant.org. Click on “Our Filing Cabinet,” choose Gracious Reconciliation and Dismissal Policy - then choose version “Corrections Noted.”

If you have questions/ comments, contact Stated Clerk Lynn Hargrove at lhargrove@pbyofnewcovenant.org. Amendments must be in writing and sent to Lynn by Tuesday, March 17. Please suggest where the amendment would be inserted into the document, as well as the proposed language of the amendment.

Board of Pensions Workshops

You are invited to attend the Board of Pensions free planning seminars, which will be held at the Presbytery Center in March.

On Wednesday, March 4, the seminar, “Post-Retirement,” will be offered for plan retirees, surviving covered partners, and their guests 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. Learn about updates in the Pension Plan and Medicare, post-employment financial management, assessing your estate plan, and more!

Another one-day seminar, “Render unto Caesar,” will be held Thursday, March 5, 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., for those involved in church

finances. Addressing how to structure terms of call and clergy taxes to be more cost-effective, the workshop is designed for church treasurers, administrators, and active clergy.

Register February 6, preferably online at www.pensions.org/seminars. Another registration option is to call 800-773-7752 between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. weekdays. There is a presbytery meal fee of \$15 per person for lunch and refreshments.

If you have a question, contact Sharon Darden at the presbytery, sdarden@pbyofnewcovenant.org or 713-526-2585, ext. 204.

Clerk’s Corner

Rev. Lynn Hargrove, Stated Clerk
Presbytery of New Covenant



Are you ready for some GOOD NEWS from our pews?

I am always excited to hear stories of our congregations, big and small, reaching into their communities to make a difference as the hands and feet of Jesus Christ. Lives are being changed!

At **First Alvin**, both attendance and giving are up over last year. Could it be because they are more active in missions? They are making better use of their buildings (good stewardship) and are hosting “Family Promise.” This is an organization that helps folks get back on their feet by offering accommodations in local congregations for a week at a time. The host congregation also provides dinner during their stay. The Family Promise model of care costs 1/3 less to operate than traditional shelters. This congregation also hosts “The Gathering Place” which offers a day of care for those with Alzheimer’s or dementia so that their caregivers have a chance to take a break.

Down the road a little ways in **First Angleton**, “Messy Church” is bringing in families to experience Jesus Christ through creativity, celebration, and hospitality. It offers a church, experience for people at any stage of faith and promotes growing in faith as a family—nuclear, extended, church and global. The congregation also offers a food pantry and is also a “Gathering Place.”

Up at **Atascocita**, the new Worship Arts Committee utilizes and appreciates the talents of many of the members of the congregation. When I attended recently, I overheard one teenager say to another, “You should join this committee. It’s fun!” They also minister through the Kid’s Hope Mission project at a local elementary school, where mentors commit one hour each week during the school year to work with a particular child to tutor, listen, and know the children with whom they work.

Over in **Faith Baytown**, fifteen members have been trained as Lay Chaplains through the Community of Hope which received the comment, “UNBELIEVABLE!” They host an open mic night and other events on Wednesday nights. They also work with Meals on Wheels, a food pantry, a pet pantry, and the Relay for Life.

On the west side of Houston, the congregation of **John Knox Presbyterian** holds an annual bazaar from which the proceeds go to four area ministries. This event generates much more funding than used to be in the budget. The mayor and city councilperson make it a point to attend. Their old model of Vacation Bible School has been remodeled into “Mission Camp” where the kids are inspired through learning about mission opportunities. They host another congregation and share World Communion Sunday and Easter with them, as they better reflect the diversity in the community.

The folks at **Webster Presbyterian** served as one of the mission teams in Peru this summer through the outreach of the presbytery. They built tables and chairs, and so much more, for a congregation in a small town in the mountains. They had a larger group go than they had expected on this first time venture. They reached out to the local elementary school, hospitals, shelters, food banks and with Habitat for Humanity. Now they are known in their community as an “engaged church”!

I am encouraged by stories like this, and hope you are, too! In a world full of bad news, it is uplifting to hear some GOOD NEWS! As we enter 2015, the theme for the presbytery is “Engaging Communities.” How will you take on this challenge, and share the story of what is happening in your congregation?



Mary's Musings

Mary Marcotte, Associate General Presbyter
Presbytery of New Covenant

*Here's the church and here's the steeple,
Open the doors and where are all the people?*

Much has been made in church circles of the steep declines in worship attendance and membership across the mainline churches. This membership decline began in the late 60s and has accelerated rapidly in the last decade. These declines are documented across the mainline and among evangelicals denominations, Catholics, Orthodox, and other world faith traditions as well.

The new century has brought a "retreat for America's congregations" according to David A. Roozen in an analysis of the findings of the 2008 Faith Communities Today survey. In October 2013, research of the Pew Institute reported on the rise of the "Nones"—those with no faith community. This group of the "Nones" is actually the fastest growing 'faith' group in America today. That the "Nones" are disproportionately represented among 20–35 year olds offers both warning and the blessings of a potential mission field. Close to 60% of those who grew up in the church are dropping out after high school and giving little sign of coming back. The particular needs and concerns of this generation are well addressed by folks like Kenda Creasy Dean (*Almost Christian*) and Greg Kinnamon (*You Lost Me*).

In November 2014 a blog post began rocketing around the Facebook community. It documented the rise of the "Dones." Perhaps the impact of the observations is linked to the catchiness of the titled group as opposed to the rather flat dechurched designation. Perhaps we are reaching a tipping point on another group of church drop outs, but the post, as they say, has legs. When I went back to research the original blogpost, I was shocked to see it had generated over 80 pages of comments! As a related article in Children's Ministry Magazine puts it, the exodus of the "Dones," the rise of the "Nones", and the disappearance of "Millenials" do not look good for a church unwilling to listen.

So who are the "Dones"? They have been solid church members for years. They've been regular in worship attendance, faithful in Bible study, and ever dependable volunteers. They have been generous with sharing both talents and treasures. But they are walking away in significant numbers. And these folks are walking away, not just down the street in search of another church but out the door with expressed desire to never be part of a church again. They are just DONE. They may not have lost their faith in God, but they have lost their faith in faith communities.

My sense is that this is a different group than those simply on an unofficial leave of absence. In my 25 years plus working in congregations, I have frequently had the opportunity to watch the disappearance of empty nesters from the roster of regulars. Typically I thought of these folks as those whose involvement was primarily for the benefit of their children. Now I'm seriously rethinking that simple classification. While the timing may well coincide with the departure of the last born—or the acquisition of a beach house or the indulgence in more frequent travel—I strongly suspect there is something far deeper going on. And the statistics would seem to support that analysis.

Many, but certainly not all of these "Dones" are members of what has been described as the panini generation, a hot mess pressed thin between the needs of their children and their increasingly frail parents. How are faith communities helping them navigate generational changes, end of life issues, mid-life crises, and questions about their own faith? Faced with life's complexity, are they experiencing church as a safe place to bring their questions and struggles, or is it a place where simple platitudes are the regular diet?

Has Sunday morning become a time where spiritual nurture and experience of God's power and grace takes a back seat to committee functions and task force ultimatums? In recent weeks I've personally heard of people

Mary's Musings continues in next column

community news

Mental Health Symposium planned

Many in the U.S. suffer from some form of mental health problem but are able to function in society. Because of the stigma attached to people with mental health problems, more education is needed to help dispel stereotypes and provide the support needed by these individuals. Unfortunately, mental health problems are now handled mainly by the Criminal Justice System.

The Congregational Resourcing Team is organizing a Mental Health Symposium to take

place in early 2016. The Symposium will cover the causes, treatment, research, resources in our presbytery, and how pastors and members can better minister to those suffering with mental health issues. Speakers who are experts in the area of mental health problems will present information to help us learn how to include those with mental health problems in the circle of God's love. If interested in helping to plan this symposium, contact TE Charlotte Kibler, HR, at charwk@juno.com or 281-744-0171.

Interfaith Conversation

You are cordially invited to a conversation with Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston, and Rabbi David Rosen, Congregation Beth Yeshurun, Houston, on Monday, January 12, 7:30–9:30



p.m. at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart (1111 St. Joseph Parkway at San Jacinto). There will be many other issues discussed, including the historic document, *Nostra Aetate*, which transformed

interfaith relations and in particular Catholic-Jewish relations after it was passed by the Second Vatican Council 50 years ago. Additional conversation about global and domestic issues facing the interfaith community will be part of the conversation.



Rabbi Rosen

Mark your calendars now! Please RSVP by Thurs., January 8, at <https://adllowensteinlecture2015.eventbrite.com>

Mary's Musings continued

running away from serving on yet another committee or arguing yet another topic or feeling spiritually drained. These are folks asking themselves, why bother?

So what can we do? Perhaps, as a starting point, we can ask a few good questions and then listen hard to the answers. Tom Schultz offers these helpful suggestions.

- Why are you part of this church? What keeps you here?
- Have you ever contemplated stepping away from the church - why or why not?
- How has your relationship with God changed over the last few years - and how would you describe it now?
- How (if at all) is the church contributing to your relationship with God?
- What would need to change here to help you grow more toward Jesus' call to love God and neighbor?

So let's hear it from the "almost Dones." May we be inspired to be more faithful representatives of the body of Christ and accompany them on their journeys of faith. Let us not exhaust them by our demands, banish them with our blindness, or dismiss them with easy answers to life's hard questions.

highlights

Honoring the Past—Celebrating the Future

Congratulations to First Presbyterian Church, Galveston! The congregation will celebrate the church's 175th Anniversary the weekend of January 17-18. The committee has been hard at work for the past year, planning the Celebration Weekend activities. There will be a commemorative tree planting on the church grounds and the packing and burying of a time capsule on Saturday morning, Saturday evening, the 175th Anniversary Dinner will be held for the congregation, local and State officials and invited guests at Galveston's historic Garten Verein.

Dr. Thomas G. Long, Bandy Professor of Preaching at the Candler School of Theology, Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, will be the guest speaker for the weekend. Recognized as one of the twelve most effective preachers in the English-speaking world, Dr. Long will speak at the Anniversary Dinner Saturday night and again on Sunday morning at the 11:00 a.m. worship service.

The church, which dates



First Presbyterian Church, Galveston

back to 1840, has survived numerous hurricanes, including the "Great Storm of 1900," still recognized as the single most devastating disaster in the history of the U.S. with over 6,000 lives lost.

Galveston's First PC has the distinction of being the oldest church on Galveston Island. This will be recognized by a proclamation from the Mayor and City Council of Galveston which will declare January 18, 2015 "First Presbyterian Day in Galveston." In addition, the anniversary will be recognized by the State of Texas Senate and the U.S. Senate.

Support for Central American child migrants

In August 2014, a group of concerned faith leaders gathered at Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston (IMGH) to better understand the issues surrounding the news stories regarding an influx of unaccompanied minors and others crossing into Texas from Central America via Mexico.

From that initial meeting of more than 50 faith community representatives, a working group (Houston Interfaith Disaster Response Alliance) formed to formulate an interfaith response focused primarily in Harris and contiguous counties. HIDRA

determined to establish a fund of resources to be made available to schools and/or not-for-profit social service agencies for the purpose of filling unmet needs of Central American child migrants and their caregivers.

TE Helen Deleon and General Presbyter Mike Cole participated in this interfaith coalition to address the problems in Houston. The creation of this fund is their way of responding to the unmet needs of these children and their host families.



Making History Today

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



"Stewards of a Vision"

Not all plans pan out as hoped. Sometimes, however, a vision becomes a reality, surpassing the wildest dreams even of those who initiated the vision. From 1906 to 1950 Presbyterians of all ages gathered at the Westminster Encampment on the southeastern edge of Kerrville, Texas, for retreats, camps, and conferences. In 1923 it became a neighbor to the newly-established Presbyterian school known as Schreiner Institute (now Schreiner University).

By the 1940s Westminster Encampment no longer was large enough to meet the needs of Presbyterians. Not far away an opportunity presented itself. In 1936 Dan Moran, president of the Continental Oil Company, had bought 6500 acres of land along the Guadalupe River, about 20 miles west of Kerrville from another business man, Odie R. Seagraves. Moran built several buildings on the land using oil pipes and limestone that was native to the surrounding Hill Country. The chapel, the Guest Lodge, a roller skating rink, the catwalk, and the slide into the river are examples of Moran's work.

In 1948 Moran died of a brain tumor. Rev. R. Matthew Lynn of Midland and Dr. Charles L. King of Houston were two of several Presbyterians who contacted Moran's widow Marie to try to negotiate a sale of the property to replace the Westminster Encampment. Because the Morans were Catholics, some were surprised that she agreed to sell the property to the Presbyterians. The sale price was \$512,500.

The Synod of Texas approved the purchase and undertook a successful campaign to raise the funds to pay for the property. Since then, Mo-Ranch has had six presidents who have overseen its program and property: Ovid West, Bill Henning, Otis Moore, Guy Delaney, David Jordan, and the current president Dick Powell. More than 42,000 men, women, and children come to the ranch for spiritual refreshment and renewal. Much of the original 6,500 acres were sold to the Kerr Wildlife Management Area.

Today Mo-Ranch belongs to the Synod of the Sun. Every year it hosts a variety of conferences and groups, one of the largest of which is the annual Men's Conference (the largest gathering of Presbyterian men in the country). In addition, there are two women's conferences, youth conferences, a young adult conference, a music conference, and a quilting conference. At Thanksgiving the ranch hosts over 500 persons for a Thanksgiving meal, and on January 1 there's the Polar Bear Challenge.

Over the years Mo-Ranch has benefited from the faithful stewardship of thousands of persons—from board members to employees to summer staff to conference participants to individuals who love and support Mo-Ranch.

As we make history today, may we continue to support the original vision of that group of Presbyterians in 1948 who took a leap of faith in investing not only in real estate in that part of the Hill Country, but also in the future for generations of God's people. May the next 66 years be as fruitful for that ministry as the past 66 have been.

For a more complete history of Mo-Ranch, see Bob Lively's 1987 history, *By Streams of Water*.

Next Connections deadline

The next Connections copy deadline is Wednesday, February 11, for the March/April 2015 issue. Please send articles and photos to Helen Wolf at any time hwolf@pbyofnewcovenant.org.

Visioning Our Future

By RE David Coles, RE Shelley Hernandez
and TE Lynn Hargrove



“May we live in interesting times” has been attributed to a saying in a Chinese fortune cookie. Whether or not that is true, what is true is that we are now living in interesting times in the church. Many are struggling as dearly held beliefs are challenged, while others embrace the change in the air. Yet it is in these kinds of times that Presbytery of New Covenant is called to “Vision our Future” together. To that end, a team has committed to visiting our congregations and others groups, listening to their stories of being church together. An experienced consultant is advising the visitation team.

At the November presbytery meeting, commissioners were asked to reflect on their experience of being part of the presbytery and to say what makes our presbytery unique to them. Additionally, they were asked to name their three wishes for our presbytery, as well as how the presbytery could make the wishes come true.

Here are some of the comments:

“I like to listen to the sermons of the prospective ministers and when we can laugh together. We are gracious!”

“I began to learn that this presbytery is out in front in planting a range of cross cultural congregations. We have a capacity to respond righteously to the changing character and circumstances of the wider society which is much more multi-racial.”

“I was a commissioner to a General Assembly. The team that the presbytery elected was a great mix of similar and diverse beliefs all tied together by our Presbyterian doctrine. I appreciate the diversity of worship.”

“I appreciated the hospitality of the variety of churches hosting the presbytery meetings. They are most gracious. I appreciate our smaller churches and our local missions.”

“I wish for a stronger commitment to social issues, and not to be mired in denominational issues so we can move forward. I wish for a greater sense of trust in the presbytery.”

“I wish we would maintain our flat structure and continue to release communities into their passions and gifts. I wish we can continue to support those missionaries that are on the field and doing the work.”

“The presbytery can assist by holding steady and by continuing to seek reconciliation; by supporting both teaching elders and congregations; and by continuing to work toward being a community that acts justly, loves mercy, and walks humbly.”

“I wish for continued growth, uplifting Christ even more as we adapt to the continually changing world around us. The presbytery can assist by enlarging the number of target groups that can facilitate planting new congregations while slackening some of the constraints of directing these congregations, and allowing young women and men to begin leading before they start theological training.”

“I value that the presbytery shows mutual respect, is permission-giving and flexible in maximizing involvement and inviting diversity.”

“It would look like love that would flood the world.”

If your church hasn't already been part of the Visioning Conversation, email Lynn at lhargrove@pbyofnewcovenant.org; the Visioning Team will set a convenient time to visit your session or congregation. Act quickly—church visitations will end early next year. Don't miss out on this great opportunity for your church to be “heard.”

mission an

Walking with Our Partner: 2015 Guatemala Trip with CEDEPCA

You are invited to walk with our partner CEDEPCA (Protestant Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America) and discover Guatemala in all its diversity, complexity, and beauty on a trip there July 18–25, 2015. Travel through this enchanting country and get to know the people of diverse



cultures through CEDEPCA programs and its relationships with other Guatemalans working together to make life better for their people. Experience answers to such questions as: Why are Guatemalan children fleeing to the U.S.? How does CEDEPCA's “seminary on wheels” reach faith leaders in remote areas of the country? Houses lost, lives lost—where do people turn when natural disasters hit? What do Guatemalan women have in common with women in the U.S.?

Trip Leaders are Julia Ann Moffett, retired PC(USA) Missionary in Central America. JAMfftt@gmail.com or 281-361-5105—and Sharyl Davis, Co-Chair of CEDEPCA Partnership Network of Presbytery of New Covenant, and Missions Director at Northwoods PC, Houston. sharyl@northwoods.org or 281-444-8861

Cost is \$950 plus airfare (tax-deductible). Scholarship assistance is available. The group will stay in basic, dormitory-style guest houses (pensions), which are accustomed to the dietary concerns of people from the U.S. The guest houses provide purified drinking water, bathrooms and showers.

Registration deadline is April 1, 2015—registration form and \$200 deposit. Make check to Presbytery of New Covenant, and send to: Sharyl Davis; Northwoods Presbyterian Church; 3320 Cypress Creek Parkway, Houston, TX 77068.

Special opportunity for youth



High school youth from our presbytery are being offered the unique opportunity to learn where and how faith and politics intersect, and how to participate as responsible citizens in the legislative process. A

trip to Washington, D.C., July 11–17, is open to 20 youth at a cost of \$1555/person (all inclusive). Participants will spend 7 days and 6 nights exploring our nation's capital. Deadline to register is February 1. A \$500 deposit is required.

For more information, contact TE Cassandra Dahnke, pastor@woodforestpc.org or (713-444-1254) or TE Tomas Spath, Parish Associate (281-782-4454).

Connect from page 6

many will come who need healings and other miracles in their lives—including healing of relationships. I believe white-skinned people like me whose first language is English will be in a minority, but we will be warmly greeted. I believe people like me, in their sixties, will be in a

distinct minority, but again we will be warmly greeted. I believe the Holy Spirit who is both Ancient and New will be powerfully present, that Christ will be lifted up, and that he and the Father will be glorified. For more information, go to <https://gospelcrusade.org/houston/>.

and ministry

youth news

A Houston Evangelistic Event

By TE Winfield 'Casey' Jones

PASTOR, FIRST PC OF PEARLAND AND A FORMER MODERATOR OF THE PRESBYTERY OF NEW COVENANT

The PC(USA) believes there is “one holy, catholic and apostolic church.” Our first great end is “the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind.” Some more conservative denominations may be “cessationist”—claiming that the age of miracles has ceased—but mainline denominations like the PC(USA) and the Anglican communion have often been more open to the current miraculous activity of God’s Spirit.

The themes of evangelism, being part of one global church, and openness to the Spirit of God come together in a Houston evangelistic event February 20–21 at 7:00 p.m. at BBVA Compass Stadium (the soccer stadium). Reinhard Bonnke has devoted most of his life to doing evangelism in Africa. I believe God wants to use this event to accomplish three things: 1. To bring people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ; 2. To revitalize and fill more fully with God’s Spirit those whose faith has grown cold; 3. To powerfully show God’s reality and power to save by performing miracles.

In an article in *Christianity Today* there are positive assessments of some of Reinhard Bonnke’s meetings in Africa, but also more negative reviews.

H. Vinson Synan says that history will vindicate Bonnke’s contribution to global evangelism. “He will go down as the greatest mass evangelist of all time, even greater



Reinhard Bonnke

than Billy Graham as far as numbers of converts and huge crowds that hear him speak. I saw the greatest miracles I’ve ever seen. Blind people received sight, and people got up out of wheelchairs.

Everybody goes to Bonnke crusades—Catholics, Muslims, people from all religions, and those with no religion.”

“Cecil M. Robeck Jr., director of the David J. DuPlessis Center for Christian Spirituality at Fuller Seminary, wonders whether mass public meetings still are an effective form of evangelism in the West. He notes that Americans relate primarily in other ways, especially through social media. ‘Billy Graham’s day has passed,’ Robeck says. ‘I don’t think Bonnke can raise anywhere the level of anticipation or participation that Graham did in the 20th century.’

The proclamation of the good news in the gospels and in Acts is almost always accompanied by miracles performed both by Jesus and by his disciples. During the Reformation, perhaps due to an over-emphasis on human reason and also perhaps due to perceived Roman Catholic abuses pertaining to relics and to reliance on the Virgin Mary, Protestants in the West began to downplay and even to deny the miraculous. As good as Billy Graham was, his generation of American evangelists were typically “Western”—the good news was powerfully presented as preaching and as important information, but the emphasis was more on making a rational decision for Christ without the extra emphasis of experiencing the Spirit of God through a sense of God’s presence or through signs and wonders. But these emphases are often present today in the third world where the gospel is spreading rapidly.

My hunch is that in Houston, the most racially diverse large city in America, a large number of people will come and be touched by God. I believe that many attendees will be recent immigrants representing many different cultures and that

Connect continues on page 6

Have you signed up for Conclaves 2015?

Conclave weekends are February 20–22 and February 27–March 1 at Cho-Yeh Camp & Conference Center, Livingston, TX. These fun, faith-filled weekends for Presbyterian youth groups and adult advisors (21 & older, ratio 1 adult: 5 youth) are led by Presbytery’s Youth Connection Council (PYCC). Cost, \$130/person, includes lodging, meals, a Christian concert and conference t-shirt.



Registration Packet available at: www.pbyofnewcovenant.org. Register online at: www.campcho-yeh.org/retreats/reservations-and-pricing/conclaves. Registration deadline is Monday, January 20, 2015.

Donations needed for Conclaves’ mission project

This February at our presbytery’s Youth Conclaves retreats, youth and adult participants will engage in a hands-on mission project to benefit Project Linus, a non-profit organization that provides homemade blankets to children in need. Youth and adults will cut, tie and create blankets so children will know they are wrapped in God’s love.



You are invited to donate fabric and/or monetary donations to aid in this project.

- Provide fleece fabric in two-yard increments. Fabric can be dropped off in the Presbytery Center.
- Monetary donations can be sent to the presbytery office, attention Caressa Murray. Please make checks payable to “Presbytery of New Covenant” and write “Conclaves—Project Linus” in the memo line. All donations are needed by Friday, February 13, 2015.

Youth Mission trip: ‘Project Homecoming’

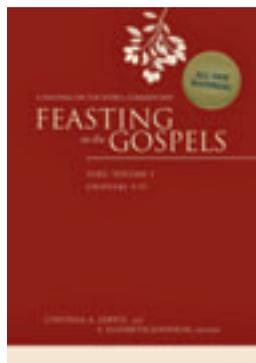
Youth groups of our presbytery are invited to join Covenant PC in College Station, First PC in Huntsville, St. Andrew’s PC in Beaumont, and First PC in Alvin the week of June 14–20 for an amazing week of mission, worship, fellowship, intentional community, and fun in New Orleans! Cost is \$300 + transportation per person. Adult to Youth



ratio is 1:4. Participants will cook and eat together, share chore duties, build a home or community project through the Project Homecoming organization, and participate in compelling programming each night. This will be a challenging week both physically and emotionally.

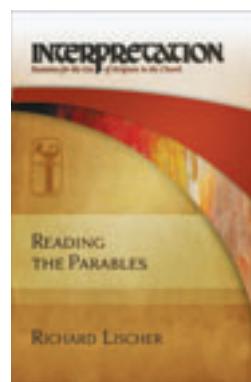
Space is limited so sign up today! Contact TE Caressa Murray for more information at cmurray@pbyofnewcovenant.org or 281-798-5993.

in the resource center new dvd and book resources



Feasting on the Gospels—Luke vol. 1

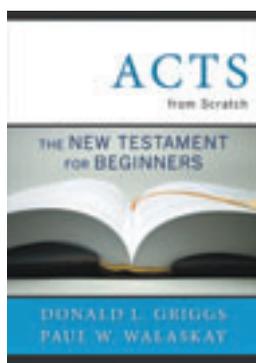
Continuing with the outstanding scholarship that this series has become known for, this verse by verse commentary on the first 11 chapters of Luke offers four unique perspectives on each passage with essays addressing theological insights, pastoral issues, exegetical questions, and homiletic applications. The volume is part of the reference collection of the Resource Center.



Interpretation: Reading the Parables

By Richard Lischer

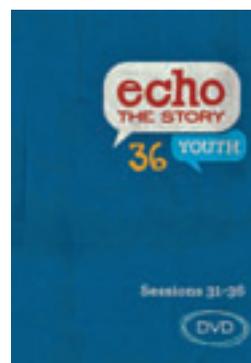
A commentary helpful for study and for preaching offers technical advice on reading parables, detailing four theories helpful in reading them and includes chapters on reading the parables within the context of the gospels of Mark, Matthew, and Luke. Chapters in reading parables in the human condition and with the poor and with the saints add further depth. Solid scholarship combines with accessible writing to make this a particularly useful resource.



Acts from Scratch

By Donald L. Griggs and Paul W. Walaskay

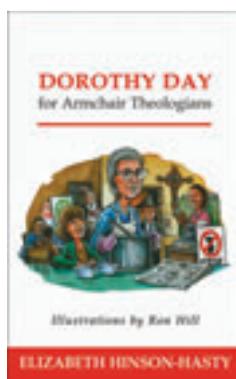
Continuing in the tradition of earlier Bible from Scratch entries, Don Griggs and Paul Walaskay have provided materials for a meaty seven-week study of the story of the spread of the early church. Includes an excellent leader's guide which contains helpful hints about room set ups, clearly detailed session plans, and extra handouts to facilitate discussion. The series offers information and learning exercises designed to build the learner's confidence and competence in dealing with scripture. Since the leader's guide is bound into the student book it could be used for shared teaching leadership.



Echo the Story 36

DVD Curriculum for youth

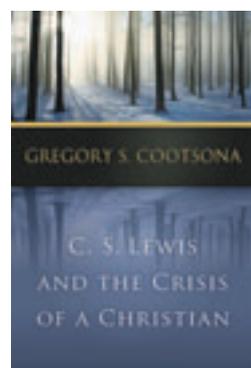
Our friends at Augsburg Fortress press bring the same teaching theory of "storying" to a more in depth, yearlong study for youth that marked their previous 11 story overviews. The series helps capture the major themes of scripture and invites participants to find where their personal story fits into the great story of scripture. While designed for teens, this is a series which could be well used with adults who are new to the Christian faith. Each 6-week unit is supported by an excellent leader's guide, which will circulate with the DVD used in each session. Those wishing to use the series can opt to purchase student sketchbooks directly from the publisher.



Dorothy Day for Armchair Theologians

By Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty

Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty offers a solid introduction to the life, ministry, and theology of Dorothy Day who was a passionate advocate for the rights and human value of those living in poverty. Day followed the call of Jesus to friendship and solidarity with the marginalized. Embodied hospitality and advocacy for the voiceless, Day was anything BUT an armchair theologian herself.



C.S. Lewis and the Crisis of a Christian

By Greg Cootsona

Lewis is well known as a Christian apologist whose work speaks to the skeptical modern world and as the beloved author of the Narnia books. This volume looks at ways Lewis can guide us through the ups and downs of the personal Christian journey. Lewis experienced the absence of God when those closest to him died. He wrestled with doubt, wondering if God is real or simply a projection of his own wishes. Using a framework of crises faced in Atheism, Christian life, and in the human condition, Cootsona explores temptations of doubt that Lewis wrestled with in his many writings.



Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs for Everyone

By John Goldingay

A lovely volume for personal devotional use or for group study, formatted in the way that has become familiar to fans of the Old Testament for Everyone series. These three books are all associated with the Wisdom of Solomon. Unlike other Old Testament books, they do not mention Torah, the exodus or the covenant. These simple and practical books are filled with hope for life lived attuned with God.



For the Life of the World: Letters to the Exiles

7-session adult DVD study

Exploring the meaning of the implications of being "in the world but not of it," this quirky, beautiful series explores the essential question, What is our salvation for? We are invited to join in God's economy of all things, "oikonomia," as we explore what it means to live in exile while exhibiting love, creative service, order, wisdom, wonder and being the church. Video segments are about 20 minutes each, leaving ample time for discussion.

Honorably Retired!

The status of Honorably Retired (HR) has been granted to four pastors in the Presbytery of New Covenant.

TE Linda Sharon (Chaplain), received her MDiv from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in 2005 and was ordained in 2007 after two Clinical Pastoral Education residencies at the Methodist Hospital, Texas Medical Center, with a concentration in Oncology. Linda also earned certification as an ACPE Board Certified Chaplain and served as staff chaplain in the DeBakey Heart ICU. Linda has relocated to Mabank, TX, to be with her husband, TE Tom Sharon, who had accepted a call as Pastor of First PC, Mabank, TX.



Linda Sharon

Linda now serves at First PC, Mabank, as Parish Associate.

TE Mark Stoub (First Presbyterian, Baytown) received his MDiv from Louisville Seminary and a DMin from McCormick Seminary in Chicago.



Mark Stoub

Mark has served churches in Missouri, Illinois, Tennessee, and Texas. He is the author of *Blood Under the Altar* and a soon-to-be

released sequel. He and his wife plan to move to Kyle, TX, to write and fix up the family home that was built in 1912. His retirement is effective May 3, 2015.

TE Debbie Leo (Member-at-Large), received her MDiv from Austin Seminary. She has served as a hospice chaplain, a caregiver, as interim pastor at St. John's PC, Houston, and associate pastor for Christian Education at Central Presbyterian, Houston. She is the co-creator of Worship Weavers, Brigid's Place. She and her husband plan to continue enjoying the meditation that comes through art, silence, nature, gardening, and riding mountain bikes on Sugar Land levees.

Also granted HR status was **TE Samuel Shen Hung Hsu** (Member-at-Large). Sam began his ministry as an industry ministry director in Taiwan. After 16 years of ministry in Taiwan, he came to the U.S. to study at Austin Presbyterian Seminary.

Through the years, Sam has established a church, served as an interim pastor, a Christian Education pastor, and board director at Houston Taiwan Institute for Senior Citizens. He and his wife have 2 children and 1 grandchild.



Sam Hsu

Welcome to New Covenant!

Rev. Jimmie Chaffin, HR, has transferred to New Covenant Presbytery from Arkansas Presbytery. He received a MA degree from Ohio State, his MDiv from Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, a DMin from McCormick Theological Seminary, and a Diploma in the Art of Spiritual Direction from San Francisco Theological Seminary. Jim pastored three churches in Kentucky before coming to Texas. He is serving at Woodlands Community PC as Spiritual Director, an area of special interest to him.



Jimmie Chaffin

Jim had a military career with the U.S. Army prior to his ministry in the Presbyterian Church. He served in Korea in the 1960s and then in the Vietnam War. In 2013, he was inducted into the U.S. Army Quartermaster Hall of Fame. Jim and his wife Cynthia have a daughter and a son.

TE Chun Jae Jang (Love PC, Houston). He has transferred from the LA Presbytery of Korean PC Abroad and called to serve at Love PC, Houston. He received a BTh degree from the Presbyterian Theological College in Seoul, Korea, and received his MDiv from Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Seoul. He was ordained in 2002.

Lauren Suba (St. Philip PC, Houston) completed her ordination exams at the November presbytery meeting by preaching a sermon and answering questions from the Committee on Examinations. Lauren will be ordained February 1 at St. Philip PC, Houston.

Candidate completes ordination exams

Lauren received a BA degree from Hood College in Maryland, an MBA in International Management from Thunderbird Graduate School in Arizona, and her MDiv from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. She has been called to serve as Executive Director for United Campus Ministry of Greater Houston.

Lauren Suba



Lauren Suba

Youth Workers Gatherings

A colleague group for youth workers (part and full time) has been started and meets the first Tuesday of each month. Come be part of the next gatherings on January 6 and February 3, from Noon to 2:00 p.m. at Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church (11612 Memorial Drive, Houston, Texas 77024).

Contact person: Caressa Murray, cmurray@pbyofnewcovenant.org or 281-798-5993



Youth Adult Retreat

Young adults, ages 18 (graduated high school) to 30, are invited to a FREE weekend retreat at beautiful Camp Cho-Yeh the weekend of March 27-29.

Arrive Friday night and enjoy getting to know other young adults from around our presbytery. On Saturday the group will work on the ground of Camp Cho-Yeh to aid in their camp improvement and beautification. That evening sit

around the campfire and enjoy snacks and fellowship! On Sunday we will worship together, conclude work on the grounds, and then dismiss after lunch. All meals and lodging will be provided.

Space is limited so reserve your spot soon! Contact Caressa Murray to sign up at cmurray@pbyofnewcovenant.org or 281-798-5993.

January 6

Youth Workers Gathering
Memorial Drive PC
Houston, TX

January 22

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

January 22–February 26

Powerful Tools for Pastoral Caregivers
Interface Samaritan Counseling Center
Houston, TX

January 30–31

Church Officer Enrichment
ChristChurch
Bellaire, TX

January 31

Young Adults Mission Day
Books Between Kids
Houston, TX

February 3

Youth Workers Gathering
Memorial Drive PC
Houston, TX

February 20–22

Youth Conclaves
Cho-Yeh
Livingston, TX

February 27–March 1

Youth Conclaves
Cho-Yeh
Livingston, TX

March 4 & 5

Board of Pensions Workshops
Presbytery Center
Houston

March 21

Presbytery Meeting
St. Philip PC
Houston, TX

March 27–29

Young Adults Retreat
Cho-Yeh
Livingston, TX

April 14–16

Clergy Retreat
Camp Allen
Navasota, TX

January 12-16



2nd Annual Ecumenical Prayer Service

After a yearlong planning process, an Ecumenical Prayer Service, organized by Christian denominational leaders from across Houston, will be held during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. All are welcome to attend this special service Friday, January 23, at Lakewood Church. Clergy are encouraged to arrive at 6:30 p.m. for a brief processional rehearsal. Wear whatever vestments are “normal” for you. At 7:30 p.m. there will be a concert of praise, followed by a Prayer Service at 8:00 p.m. A unified choir under the direction of Dr. Andre LaCour will rehearse Tuesdays, January 13 and 20, 7:00 p.m. at Lakewood Church.

January 22



Fresh Elastic for Stretched-Out Educators

Is the use of technology bringing our communities of faith closer together or pulling us apart? We claim that we cannot live without our digital devices, but is there a more faithful way to live with them? At the next meeting of Fresh Elastic for Stretched-Out Educators, together let us explore “How to Use Technology in the Church.” Come ready to discuss and share what is happening in your congregation so that we can learn from one another. If you are a volunteer, paid staff person, teaching elder or just curious, you are invited to come Thursday, January 22, 11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m. at the Presbytery Center.

Lunch will be served. Your RSVP will assist our planning. Please send replies to Anne Wilson at anne.aiko.wilson@gmail.com by Monday morning, January 19.

January 30-31

Church Officer Enrichment: It's 1, 2, 3 events in one!

New Covenant's Annual Church Officer Enrichment Event will experiment with a broader format and wider reach January 30 and 31 at host ChristChurch Presbyterian in Bellaire. The 2015



Cynthia Rigby

design grew out of conversations with Synod of the Sun partners about providing more opportunities for Ruling Elders to gain knowledge and confidence guiding their work as spiritual leaders in partnership with the Teaching Elder serving their congregations. New Covenant is spreading the invitation to our neighboring presbyteries, South Louisiana and Mission, and have secured a Synod Grant to help defray travel costs for applicants traveling

more than 100 miles each way.

Participants can choose one of three ways to engage the event. Come just Friday night (\$15 meal fee), come just Saturday (\$10 meal fee), OR take advantage of the special discounted combo meal rate and come both days (\$20). There is no cost to enjoy and be inspired by workshops and speakers. Catering deadline is Jan. 16. Free childcare for those 5 and under must be requested by the same deadline.

Friday night the focus is on relationships and fellowship. A catered barbecue dinner will begin service at 6:00 p.m. While digging into tasty brisket, sides, and fixings, your toes will tap to the blue grass music of The Traveling Murphys. At 6:45 p.m. there will be guided small group conversations about leadership. The evening draws to a close with a short service of evening

prayer at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday begins with registration, coffee, and mission displays at 8:30 a.m. and Morning Prayer led by the Worship and Arts Team of Atascocita PC at 9:00 a.m. Gifted teacher and esteemed theologian Dr. Cynthia Rigby will address the topic Being Reformed in the 21st Century. Participants will then be able to select two 75-minute workshops from among 20 choices.

Full details are provided in the brochure that can be downloaded from our website, www.pbhofnewcovenant.org.

Don't miss the opportunity to start your new year with an event designed to equip new and continuing church leaders as they serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination and love in Christ honoring ways!

what's happening ... upcoming events and gatherings

January 22 to February 26

Caregiving can be tough, even for pastors

One of the least recognized consequences of long-term caregiving is compassion fatigue, which results when caregivers exhaust their ability to care with compassion. Going through the motions of caregiving without the underlying compassion can be emotionally draining and physically exhausting, especially if the caregiver sees no end to the cycle of caregiving without relief in sight. The dilemma for pastor caregivers is that while most caregivers have only one person for whom they are the principal caregiver, pastors are considered caregivers for dozens and hundreds of people.

“Powerful Tools for Pastoral Caregivers” builds on a proven approach to provide tools for pastors in their caregiving ministry. A series of six workshops with interactive group lessons, discussion, and brainstorming is designed specifically for the needs of pastors. The class will meet at Interface Samaritan Counseling Center, 4803 San Felipe, Houston (behind St. Philip PC), Thursdays, January 22 to February 26, 9:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m.

Register by calling Martha Doolittle at Interface Samaritan Counseling Center at 713-626-7990, ext. 102. Sign up early to reserve your spot; class is limited to fourteen participants.

February 8

MUSIC YOU LOVE: ROB LANDES PLAYS THE NEW SANCTUARY PIANO

MDPC's Concert Series will celebrate its tenth anniversary in 2015. All are invited to a program showcasing the new nine-foot Concert Grand Piano on Sunday, February 8, 3:00 p.m. at Memorial Drive PC, Houston. Pianist Rob Landes will demonstrate the sounds of MDPC's new Petrof piano with a program of music from the Big Band era, the movies, Broadway, and pop tunes. Always a crowd favorite, Rob returns to the Concert Series for a third time. No admission, open seating.

February 26

Lenten Silent Retreat for those Involved in educational ministry

“Silence deepens our experience of solitude because in silence we choose to unplug not only from the constant stimulation of life in the company of others but also from our own addiction to noise, words, and activity. It creates a space of listening to the knowings that go beyond words... the most essential question in solitude is: How have I been wanting to be with God and how has God been wanting to be with me?” - Ruth Haley Barton



Give yourself a day to be in a place of rest with God. Come to the Silent Retreat at Villa de Matel on Thursday, February 26, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Lunch will be provided. There is no charge but a donation is welcome. Villa de Matel is located on Lawndale within the 610 loop. To sign up or for more information, contact Connie Nyquist at Lnyquist@sbcglobal.net.

January 31

Young Adult Mission Day

Every child deserves to be a book owner! On Saturday, January 31, from 12:00–2:30 p.m., young adults of our presbytery (ages 18 graduated high school to 30ish) are invited to count, sort, and box children's books before they make their way into the arms of their new owners in the spring. To volunteer, contact Caressa Murray at cmurray@pbyofnewcovenant.org or 281-798-5993



About 85% of Houston ISD's elementary-aged children live at or below the poverty line and grow up without books in their homes. Books Between Kids strives to change this by collecting gently used books and distributing them to at-risk children by providing them with books to build their home libraries. The Books Between Kids warehouse is located at 9947 Harwin Drive, Suite C, Houston, TX 77036. (Sam Houston Toll Road & Westpark Tollway—on west side, exit Gessner off of Westpark Tollway). Note that you will not be able to see 9947 from the street. Turn in between 9941 and 9949 Harwin Drive.

Bring a book to donate!

February 22-24

Duerr Lecture Series 2015

Speaker for the 18th annual Duerr Lecture Series at St. Philip PC, Houston, Sunday-Tuesday, February 22-24, will be Dr. Douglas F. Ottati, Craig Family Distinguished Professor of Reformed Theology and Justice at Davidson College. He will preach at the Sunday morning worship services (8:30 and 11:00) and present lectures each evening at 7:00 p.m.

Dr. Ottati's lectures, “Exploring the Teaching of Jesus,” will reflect on selected features of Jesus' teachings: his message of the kingdom of God, his special concern for the poor and the outcast, and his emphasis on love of God, neighbor, and even enemies. He will explore these teachings in the gospels, some ways in which they have been interpreted in the church's theological tradition, and how they connect with broad contemporary issues.

Dr. Ottati holds M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the Divinity School, University of Chicago. He served on the faculty of Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond 1977–2007 and then joined the faculty of Davidson College where he teaches courses in Prophetic Christianity in America During the Twentieth Century, Major Figures in Theology and Ethics: Jonathan Edwards, H. Richard Niebuhr.

All lectures are free and open to everyone. Child care is available for all ages for each lecture by calling the church office, 713-622-4807.



Dr. Douglas Ottati

In Our Thoughts and Prayers

Family and friends of Pi Shih—the 104 year-old mother of RE Fu Chin Kuo (First PC, Houston) died November 5, 2014, in Taiwan.

Family and friends of RE Mark Steven Wright—Mark died November 8, 2014. He was a charter member of Covenant PC in College Station.

RE Patty Tremble (Webster PC)—Patty's mother died November 9, 2014, in Tennessee.

TE Ryan Kim, Associate Pastor at Korean Central PC, Houston—Ryan's mother died in November 2014 in South Korea. Ryan serves on presbytery's Committee for Preparation for Ministry.

Family and friends of RE Samuel Johnson Goodlow—Samuel died November 16, 2014. He was a longtime member at Pinecrest PC, Houston, elder, and trustee.

Family and friends of Johanna Schweers, Peace PC in Pearland—Johanna died November 27, 2014. Johanna's husband John is a Ruling Elder and Treasurer of the church. Daughter Olivia serves on Presbyterian Youth Connection Council (PYCC).

Family and friends of Elias Ramirez, San Pablo+Trinity PC, Houston—Elias died November 28, 2014. Elias served on the Evangelism & Church Growth Committee of the presbytery and acted as a translator for the presbytery.

Family and friends of Lloyd Earl Sheffield, Jr.—Earl, son of RE Lloyd and Joan Sheffield, died November 28, 2014. The Sheffields are members of St. Paul PC, Houston.



Kendall Boyd rings the bell as he completes his chemo treatments!

Kendall served as the Presbytery's coordinator for Ike Recovery and brother of TE Kevin Boyd, St. Paul PC, Houston.

HR = Honorably Retired | TE = Teaching Elder (Rev.) | RE = Ruling Elder | NWC = New Worshipping Community



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