

# CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter of the Presbytery of New Covenant

Growing congregations that passionately engage their communities to make disciples.

## Being and Becoming a Multigenerational Church Unpacking Generational Theory with Rev. Dr. Karl Travis

The blessing and the curse of healthy congregations is that we have four to five living generations, each with a unique worldview and organizing principles, gathered in a body committed to being a Beloved Community that focuses more on what unites us than what divides us.



Karl Travis

The Rev. Dr. Karl Travis wowed participants at the 2016 Presbyterian Leadership Enrichment Event with his insights drawn from generational theory, sparking multiple requests for more time and greater detail spent on this important topic. Karl returns to us with an extended format, designed to help church teams consider how differing generational approaches can best be addressed in a way that honors all and does not set up unintended barriers to participation. The event is Friday, March 31, and Saturday, April 1. It is hosted by St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (5308 Buffalo Speedway, Houston), sponsored by The Congregational Resourcing Team of the Presbytery of New Covenant, and made possible thanks to a generous grant from the Vision Initiative Fund.

Bring your leadership team and walk away with new insights and action plans tailored to your unique context for ministry. Register online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/being-and-becoming-a-multigenerational-church-tickets-32242699783> by Tuesday, March 28 to assist us in our hospitality preparations. Those who wish to bring their own meals are welcome to do so; meals are available for \$15 dinner and/or \$10 for box lunches. Individuals may register for Friday sessions, Saturday sessions, or both.



### Friday, March 31

- 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. Welcome and Review/Overview
- 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. Table Conversation
- 5:45 – 6:30 p.m. Dinner
- 6:30 – 7:15 p.m. Implications for Worship
- 7:15 – 7:45 p.m. Table Conversation
- 7:45 – 8:00 p.m. Evening Prayer and Dismissal

### Saturday, April 1

- 8:30 – 9:00 a.m. Coffee and Gathering
- 9:00 – 9:45 a.m. Mission Engagement
- 9:45 – 10:15 a.m. Table Conversation
- 10:15 – 10:30 a.m. Break
- 10:30 – 11:15 a.m. How We Are Organized to do Our Work - Committee Structure, Task Groups, and More
- 11:15 – 11:45 a.m. Table Conversation
- 11:45 – 12 noon Where are we now? What are the big *Ahas*?
- 12:00 – 12:45 p.m. Lunch
- 12:45 – 1:30 p.m. Money, Generosity, Giving, and Stewardship
- 1:30 – 2:00 p.m. Table Conversation
- 2:00 – 2:15 p.m. Final Remarks, Tying It Together, and a Challenge Commit to Next Steps

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## NEW COVENANT CONNECTIONS

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# Grant Money Available

Did you know that there are several different grant opportunities through the Presbytery of New Covenant? The Ministry Division Steering Committee is currently accepting applications for *Vision Initiative* and *Lynn Johnson Social Justice* Grants. Vision Initiative Grants are primarily for increasing the overall membership of our Presbytery, including things like new church development, church redevelopment, and outreach. There is up to \$56,248 available this year for possible distribution. The Lynn Johnson Social Justice Grant is primarily for education and actions to promote social justice and/or inclusion and there is up to \$10,116 available this year for possible distribution. Applications for these two grants are due **April 30**. Please contact Ann Marie Quigley-Swanson if you have questions at 281-444-8861 or [annmarie@northwoods.org](mailto:annmarie@northwoods.org).

The presbytery's Outreach

Committee also offers two sources of grant funding to congregations and mission partners in our presbytery. *Outreach Project* grants are available to support general mission and outreach efforts. *Peacemaking* grants are available to support initiatives that further the principles of Christian peacemaking. There are no deadlines for applying for these two grants. Applications will be accepted until the funds run out. Please contact Alex Lee-Cornell at [pastorsspc@gmail.com](mailto:pastorsspc@gmail.com) with questions.



Guidelines, applications, and more information about these grants are available on the [presbytery's website](http://presbytery.org) under Resources, Filing Cabinet, Grant Information and Application.

# End of the Year Statistical Reports and Church Information

By Lynn Hargrove, Stated Clerk

Many thanks to all of the clerks of session who have completed their year-end statistical reports. One of the ways these are used is to determine the number of commissioners to be elected to attend the 2018 General Assembly. It also shows us trends here in the presbytery in terms of growth and diversity. The deadline for submitting your information is March 5. Please send them to Lynn Hargrove, Stated Clerk, at [lhargrove@pbyofnewcovenant.org](mailto:lhargrove@pbyofnewcovenant.org).

Two other reports are used locally here in the presbytery offices. One is the "Supplemental Report," which tells us who serves on your staff as well as other information including disaster

planning. The other is the "Members of Session" report, which tells us who is serving your congregation for the next three years. Both of these reports are used internally to update our database. It is helpful to us to be able to communicate with the right people about various events or other topics. These reports can be sent to Patricia Brantley, our database coordinator, at [pbrantley@pbyofnewcovenant.org](mailto:pbrantley@pbyofnewcovenant.org).

We appreciate our clerks of session and the work that they do to keep our congregations organized!





## Clerk's Corner

Rev. Lynn Hargrove, Stated Clerk  
Presbytery of New Covenant

As I write this, I look forward to my first teaching session at this year's Chaplain School. Our chaplains at Port Houston offer this training for those newly called to this specialized ministry from across the USA, and sometimes in Canada. I began teaching out there when I was a second year Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) student in 2002. Part of the requirement of the school is to have a "CPE Light" experience. I tell them a story about my student internship at the Port, and we analyze it. Then I ask them each to write down a story, preferably one where s/he is not the hero, and we use it to learn. I lead ten hours over the course of the two-week school.

I was a student intern back in 1999, after having written a paper for a seminary class on missions. It was a hot summer Saturday close to the end of my ten weeks serving at the port when I ran into this situation. When I drove up to the gate to enter the area, the guard said, "Oh, I'm glad you are here. They need you down there." I thought that was an odd greeting and continued on to the dock. There I found several people gathered at the foot of the

gangway. They told me that there had been two stowaways who had hidden in a container for the week's long passage, and that they had jumped overboard and tried to swim to the other shore in order to avoid "La Migre." One of them had drowned.

I climbed the gangway and introduced myself to the crew, and they escorted me down to a hot bathroom near the engine room where the survivor was handcuffed to a pipe. His name was Jhon, and he was from Colombia. Jhon was sobbing uncontrollably, calling out for "Mi hermano" (my brother). As I sat on a shower bench, I tried in my broken Spanish to tell him why I was there. He calmed down a bit, and we tried to communicate. I learned that the one who drowned was his 18-year old brother, whom he had talked into coming with him to try to find a better life in America.

It was a long afternoon ministering to Jhon, and to the crew, and to the immigration officers. Jhon's story touched me on many levels. His mother and I were the same age. I couldn't imagine what he would say to her when

he arrived home again. It was probably not the "Prodigal Son" celebration. I wondered what his experience would be when he was deported and what being locked up was like. This was the first voyage for the young captain, and it was not going well. I hoped that he would still have a career. I wondered what it was like to be an immigration officer.

This was just one of the experiences that I had that summer. On another ship, I encountered a lower level crewman who feared for his life because he was having problems getting along with the officers. He was afraid that he would be thrown overboard in a barrel never to be seen again. One of my favorites was the new captain that wanted to buy some sort of swimming pool to put on the deck because he knew that those in the engine room needed a place to cool off.

Often we think of the Seafarer's Ministry as Christmas boxes or magazines, but it is so much more. Our port brings in ships from all over the world so we have an opportunity to do world missions without ever leaving home. I have been committed to this ministry since I learned about it in 1998. David Wells and Tom Edwards, our two Presbyterian chaplains, would be glad to share more about their work. Call them at 713-672-0511.

## Presbytery Meeting March 18



Clear Lake PC

Saturday, March 18, is our first stated meeting of the presbytery for 2017. We will gather at Clear Lake Presbyterian Church at 1511 El Dorado Blvd, east of I-45 (Gulf Freeway).

Registration opens at 8:30 a.m. with opening worship at 9:00 a.m.

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary will be featured in the morning, with Rev. Dr. Rose Niles

preaching at the morning worship

service. Our keynote speaker will be Rev. Dr. Carolyn Helsel, an associate professor of homiletics. You may meet her here in her video profile: [http://www.austinseminary.edu/cf\\_directory/](http://www.austinseminary.edu/cf_directory/dirprofile.cfm?p=2577&id=4458)



Carolyn Helsel

[dirprofile.cfm?p=2577&id=4458](http://www.austinseminary.edu/cf_directory/dirprofile.cfm?p=2577&id=4458). Her topic will be "The Work of the Church - Preaching and Public Life." Our morning offering will provide scholarship funds.

Let's celebrate our ministry here in southeast Texas as we do our work together!



## Mary's Musings

Mary Marcotte, Associate General Presbyter  
Presbytery of New Covenant

Lent will soon be upon us, beginning with Ash Wednesday on March 1. I grew up in south Louisiana, downriver from New Orleans back in the 1960s, and the marking of Lent, in at least surface ways, was a part of the civic culture in our overwhelmingly Roman Catholic community. I knew it as the season that followed the blowout party of Mardi Gras that created a five-day weekend on our school calendars. I also knew that meat would not be served in the school cafeteria until after Easter and that my school friends would be full of chatter about what they were giving up for Lent (usually chocolate!). I was schooled to reply that Presbyterians made a commitment to DO something during Lent rather than to stop doing something, a notion that continues to resonate with me.

There are a plethora of Lenten studies that might serve as a re-commitment to study. I'm sure that Ann Weems' lovely book of prayer poems, *Kneeling In Jerusalem*, will be a part of my devotional reading. A more tech-savvy crowd might enjoy Bruce Reyes Chow's *40 Days, 40 Prayers, 40 Words*, which is designed not only to feed the reader's spiritual life but to easily share via social media. Some might be inspired by Adam Hamilton's studies such as *The Way, 24 Hours that Changed the World*, or the brand new *Creed*.

Activists inspired by Jesus's call to care for the least, last, lost, and the strangers in our midst may be fed by the brand new Lenten Reflections on *The Confession of Belhar* (Witherspoon Press), endorsed by former Moderator Heath Rada is this way: "Lent is a time to focus on spiritual growth and discipline. Using the *Belhar Confession* as a guide for Lenten reflection forces us to explore what we are called to do and be. Use it with intention. It just

might change your life." Writings of Bonhoeffer such as the collection *God is on the Cross* or *Cost of Discipleship* may encourage theological reflection that undergirds practices such as food bank donations, ministry with homeless persons, advocacy for students, refugees, or victims of violence, and more.

Corporate worship during this season can attune us to the power of the Lenten journey toward Easter joy. Protect time on your calendar to take part in special Holy Week services in your community. If we go straight from Palm Sunday parades to Easter morning proclamation, you will be missing an important part of our story. Commit to home devotions as a family. You can find wonderful inspiration at websites such as [Building Faith](#) and [worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.com](#).

Simple acts of kindness and devotion can abound. Consider one or more of these options or add your own suggestions:

- making daily additions to groceries to be given to a local food pantry
- keeping a gratitude journal of drawings, photographs, or words of what has given you joy in the day and made you more aware of God's presence in the world
- saving loose change or dollar bills - and contributing to The One Great Hour of Sharing offering
- sending a handwritten note each day to someone you know who might be lonely or in need of encouragement

When we attempt to daily engage in study, prayer, worship, and service for these days of Lent, we might just develop habits that will sustain our journey of faith throughout the year. Wouldn't our transformed lives be a testimony to the risen Lord?

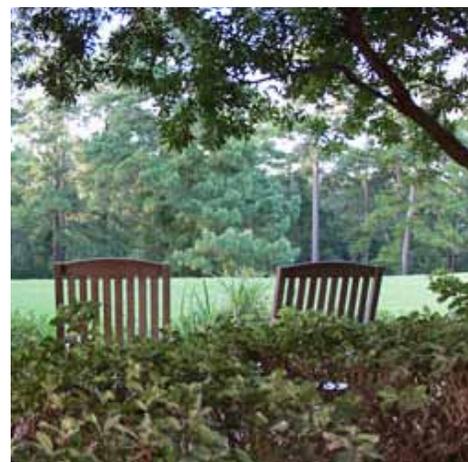
## Clergy Retreat

Rev. Dr. Laura Mendenhall will lead this year's clergy retreat on April 25 through 27 at Camp Allen in Navasota, Texas. Clergy and spouses are invited to "Finding Water in Dry Land" where they will have an opportunity to remember the source of living Water, to recognize when their thirst is quenched and when it is not, and to drink deeply from God's Word. There will be time to be nourished by good food and drink, by walks in the woods, and by rest and relaxation.

Keynoter Laura Mendenhall is a recently retired Presbyterian pastor who has served several churches in Texas and Florida. She served as President of Columbia Theological Seminary in Atlanta and as Senior Philanthropy Advisor of the Texas Presbyterian Foundation. She has served as Moderator of Mission Presbytery and in many other capacities in the Synod of the Sun and at General Assembly levels. Laura is looking forward to being with pastors from New Covenant presbytery, particularly just after Holy Week. In the exhaustion after the Easter high, may this be a time of encouragement and support. Register by April 17. Contact Carrie Walker for more information at 713-526-2585 or [cwalker@pbyofnewcovenant.org](mailto:cwalker@pbyofnewcovenant.org).



Laura Mendenhall



## Presbyterian Women Presbytery Spring Gathering

Presbytery of New Covenant Presbyterian Women (PW) and the Mission Committee of Webster Presbyterian Church invite all women to the Spring Gathering on Saturday, April 29 at 9:30 a.m. at Webster Presbyterian Church (201 West NASA Parkway, Webster). All women, regardless of whether in PW or not, are invited.

Rev. Helen DeLeon, Associate Pastor at Webster PC, will lead our worship service. Take a journey with Keynote Speaker James White of Free the Captives, a faith-based anti-human trafficking 501(c)(3) non-profit that fights the exploitation and trafficking

of Houston's youth. Become engaged and mobilized in the fight against modern day slavery and human trafficking. Lunchtime

speaker Jeff Carr, former Director of Public Affairs and News Chief at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, will help us trek to the moon and share experiences of lunar communion. The art exhibit, created by artists and builders from Webster PC and the community, will guide you to a greater understanding



of walking in the shoes of victims of human trafficking.

Details about mission opportunities, schedule, registration, meals, and child care can be found on the presbytery website: [www.pbyofnewcovenant.org](http://www.pbyofnewcovenant.org) – click on Ministries and follow the link to Presbyterian Women. **Registration deadline is Saturday, April 22.** Need a registration packet? Go to the website or contact your Cluster Coordinator or Janice Bradshaw at [janicebradshaw@suddenlink.net](mailto:janicebradshaw@suddenlink.net) or 979-777-5475. The day promises to enrich women of all ages and stages of life. We hope to see you on April 29!

## Job Openings

The Woodlands Community Presbyterian Church (WCPC) is looking to fill two part-time positions. They are seeking a part-time Sound and Media Technician for worship services and occasional events, such as weddings and memorial services. The position hours are approximately 9-10 hours per week with fewer hours in the summer.



They are also seeking an Under 18 Ministry Team Facilitator to partner with their Youth, Tween, Children, and Mission ministry teams in an administrative “behind the scenes” capacity. The position is intended to be a 20 hour per week part-time position.

You may find full job descriptions on the [presbytery's website](http://presbytery.org) under Congregations – Church Jobs. For more information about WCPC, visit [www.wcpc-tx.org](http://www.wcpc-tx.org). To apply, contact Chris Liddell at [liddellchris@hotmail.com](mailto:liddellchris@hotmail.com).

## Mental Health Symposium: Recognizing and Treating Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

On **March 25** at 2 p.m., Brandi Hobratschk, Licensed Professional Counselor, will present a program called Recognizing and Treating OCD (Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder). The program will include a topic-driven discussion to be followed by a brief question and answer period.

Approximately 2.2 million American adults currently live with OCD; however, the crippling effects of OCD often extend into the relationships these individuals share in all areas of their lives, including with family, teachers, friends, coworkers, and other community members. This talk will include a discussion of OCD symptoms and how to recognize them at various ages. Ms. Hobratschk will discuss current treatments for OCD and structures for supporting OCD sufferers.

Research indicates having an informed social support system results in improved treatment outcomes and

quality of life for OCD individuals and improved quality of relational interactions for all. Ms. Hobratschk notes that educating ourselves about OCD, how to recognize it, and how to be appropriately supportive are the first steps any individual can take toward diminishing the negative impact this disorder has on individuals, families, and communities.



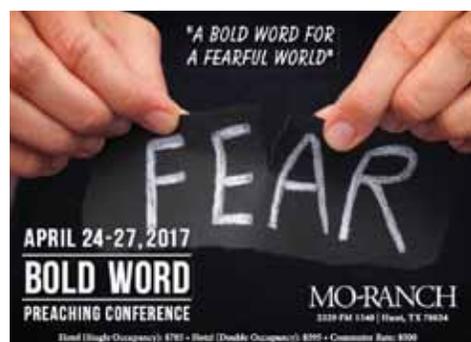
The program will be at Atascocita Presbyterian Church at 19426 Atasca Oaks. There is no charge and the public is welcome. You may read more about Ms. Hobratschk's credentials and biography at [apchumble.org](http://apchumble.org). Anyone seeking further information may call 281-852-8990 or email [apc@apchumble.org](mailto:apc@apchumble.org). The program is being presented under the auspices of a grant from The Presbytery of the New Covenant.

## Holy Grounds Café Open Mic Sunday

At Faith Presbyterian Church in Baytown, we are taking back Sunday Night. We are hosting an Open Mic on Sunday nights. We gather at 5:30 p.m. for grub and the Open Mic starts at 6:00 p.m. and goes until 7:30-8:00 p.m., depending on the sign ups. We welcome



poetry, readings, clean comedy, and all music (except for the song “Stairway to Heaven”). There will be exceptions, like on March 12 when we host a Concert of Prayer with the Bay Area Ministerial Alliance and on April 2 when we host the Love Network Benefit Concert (both start at 6:00 p.m.). Faith Presbyterian meets at 3900 N. Main in Baytown.



*What is the Church's voice in a society that is being shouted at in fear?* Bold Word Preaching Conference will feature three remarkable pastors who will preach to and address the issue of fear being spread in our society. It's a time where pastors will experience great preaching, refreshment, and renewal in their ministry with their peers and the Lord. Participants will directly learn from excellent preachers during workshops and be able to share their own expertise and connect with colleagues through a series of moderated discussions. The conference is **April 24 through 27** at Mo-Ranch in Hunt, Texas. Registration is open at [moranch.org](http://moranch.org) and space is limited.

## College Connection Conference

Mo-Ranch in Hunt, Texas is hosting its annual College Connection Conference on **May 15 through 19** for rising sophomores through recent college graduates. This year's theme is “Be the Change” as presented by Keynote Speaker, David LaMotte. Discover the strengths inside of yourself so that you can be the change you want to see in the world.



David LaMotte

Activity highlights include worship, keynote presentations, vespers, campfires, a private concert with David LaMotte, volleyball tournament, ropes course, free time and more! For rates and registration, visit [www.moranch.org/attend](http://www.moranch.org/attend).

## Can These Bones Live? Contemporary Dramas For Lent And Easter

By David H. Kehret

Here is a selection of plays and monologues which could be effectively used in worship settings during the Lent and Easter seasons. Beginning with a speech chorus that moves between scripture and contemporary situations for Ash Wednesday, the collection includes a six-voice retelling of the passion with words drawn from the synoptic gospels, texts appropriate for Easter Vigils, Resurrection celebrations, and Pentecost anticipations. Here is a resource for those seeking to expand chancel arts.



## CRT Survey

The Congregational Resourcing Team (CRT) of the Presbytery of New Covenant exists to equip and resource members and congregations for ministry in their churches and communities in support of the presbytery's vision of “Growing congregations that passionately engage their communities to make disciples.” Please help them better understand your needs by participating in a brief survey. You may find it under “What's Happening” on the home page of presbytery's website: [www.pbyofnewcovenant.org](http://www.pbyofnewcovenant.org).



### Next Connections Deadline

The next *Connections* copy deadline is Tuesday, April 11 for the May/June 2017 issue. Please send articles and photos to Theodora Pounds at [tpounds@pbyofnewcovenant.org](mailto:tpounds@pbyofnewcovenant.org).

### 2017 Presbytery Meetings

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

## Muslim Neighbor Series



By Rev. Phin Washer, Honorably Retired

Northwoods Presbyterian Church in Houston was among the congregations of the presbytery that received funding from the Lynn Johnson Social Justice Grants. The Contemporary Issues Class of the congregation used the funds early in the year to offer a six-week series, “My Neighbor is Muslim: Toward Understanding Muslim Faith and Life.”

Among the “highlighters” in the series were:

- Saadia Faruqi, an instructor in “Islam 101” at Lone Star College and author of *Brick Walls: Tales of Hope and Courage from Pakistan*, stories of ordinary Pakistanis struggling with the vicissitudes of life;

- Afshan Jilani with the Muslim Women Leadership Forum; and
- Dr. Andrew Dearman, Associate Dean of Fuller Seminary in Texas, who talked about the Quran in light of Christian scriptures.

Class attendance more than doubled from an average of approximately 30 to 67. A driver along FM 1960 (on which the church faces), noting the electronic sign advertising the series, called the church. She explained that she and her family are Muslims. They had recently moved to Texas and were anxious as to whether they would find acceptance or not. She thanked the church for sponsoring the series, said it made her day, and that she hoped to attend at least one of the series.

The sense of the planners of this project is that it has brought a much greater understanding of the Muslim faith to the participants from our congregation, easing some their own anxiousness and fears, as well as leading to the formation of some solid friendships.

## NEW COVENANT TRANSITIONS

## New Minister Member

Rev. Dr. Gwendolyn D. Magby, Honorably Retired:

Gwendolyn was ordained in 1995 and recently retired after 14 years as Pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Key West, Florida. She received her M.Div. from Union Theological Seminary and her D.Min. from Johnson C. Smith Seminary. Gwen has moved to Houston with her mother, who has Alzheimer’s. A specialized area of her ministry has been outreach into the community through various programs, such as free HIV testing, monthly gatherings for seniors, and tutoring for at-risk kids.



Gwendolyn Magby

Several other ministers will be presented at the March 18 presbytery meeting. Look for more details in the next *Connections*.

## Cho-Yeh Volunteer Work Weekend

Camp Cho-Yeh is inviting anyone ages 12 and up (under 18 must be accompanied by an adult) to a volunteer weekend of hard work, fellowship, and great food on Friday, March 31 through Sunday, April 2. There will be jobs for every skill level to help prepare the campground for summer. You may arrive on Friday night, Saturday before 12 noon, or Sunday morning. Food and overnight lodging in male and female cabins will be provided at no cost. There will be limited lodging for families of mixed gender in the Retreats Lodge - first



come, first serve. Please visit <http://www.cho-yeh.org/events/volunteer-work-weekend-2017> to sign up and learn more.

## Editor’s Note

I’m excited to present this second edition of the recently reformatted *Connections*. Thank you for helping the presbytery be better stewards of the environment and promote cost savings through this new email-friendly format. If you’d like to provide your email address or prefer to receive *Connections* in print, please contact Patricia Brantley, Circulation Manager, at [pbrantley@pbyofnewcovenant.org](mailto:pbrantley@pbyofnewcovenant.org) or 713-526-2585, ext. 101. You may also subscribe online to receive *Connections* and/or our weekly email, Tuesday Connect, at [bit.ly/TuesdayConnect](http://bit.ly/TuesdayConnect).

# YOUTH NEWS

## “Ignite Your Soul” - CONCLAVES 2017



2016-2017 PYCC

Our Presbytery's Youth Connection Council (PYCC) led two retreat weekends, called Conclaves, February 24 through 26 and March 3 through 5 at Camp Cho-Yeh in Livingston, Texas. These Conclaves weekends are designed for middle and high school youth to grow closer to one another, strengthen their relationship with God, and connect with other youth from all over our presbytery. One of the best parts about these weekends is that they are led BY youth FOR youth! PYCC is made up of 47 high school youth and 15 adults representing 21 churches of our presbytery. These youth work all year to create, plan, and lead these Conclaves weekends, which include worship, small groups, Bible study, recreation, and mission. These young leaders preach, teach, sing, and energize!



The theme for Conclaves this year was: “IGNITE YOUR SOUL” based on Matthew 5:14-16. Students examined what INFLUENCES their thoughts, words, actions, and life. What are the bad influences (people or things) in

your life that are trying to douse your flame? Are there good influences that you need to pay more attention to and lean into for support and encouragement to help you stay on the straight and narrow path of God? What IMPACT are these influences having on your life and your faith? When we reflect on these influences and the impact they have on our lives, we gain INSIGHT into where we are at, what we need, and what needs to change so that we can follow Christ with all that we say and do, every day, everywhere. What IGNITES your faith and strengthens your relationship to God? How can you use YOUR light to ignite others for Christ?

The Mission Project at Conclaves was making PLARN (plastic bag yarn) to be used in the making of mats for the homeless. The plastic bags that churches and youth groups collected and brought to Conclaves were cut into strips, and then the strips were tied together and rolled into balls (slightly larger



PLARN mat

than softballs). The PLARN balls that were made will be shipped to First Presbyterian Church in Sweetwater, Texas. The Presbyterian Women, or “The Bag Ladies” as they like to call themselves, will use these balls of PLARN to crochet sleeping mats for homeless people. These women take the mats to First Presbyterian Church in San Angelo, Texas, where they are given to the homeless as part of “Project Dignidad” (translation - dignity). We thank you for your donations of plastic bags to make this possible!

Over the two weekends, there were 262 participants and 62 PYCC, representing 32 churches in our presbytery! WOW! What a blessing this ministry is for the young people in our presbytery!

## Youth Worker Gatherings

This colleague group for adults who work with youth (paid or volunteer) meets monthly to share ideas, support, and encouragement. The gatherings are on the first Tuesday of the month from 12 noon to 2 p.m. at St. Thomas Presbyterian Church at 14100 Memorial Drive, Houston. The next meeting is March 7. Bring a lunch and come fellowship with some amazing people! For more information, contact Rev. Caressa Murray at [cmurray@pbyofnewcovenant.org](mailto:cmurray@pbyofnewcovenant.org).



Youth workers gathering together

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

# events and happenings



## March 1

Ash Wednesday

## March 3-5

Youth Conclaves  
*Camp Cho-Yeh*  
Livingston, Texas

## March 7

Youth Worker Gathering  
*St. Thomas PC*  
Houston, Texas

## March 18

Presbytery Meeting  
*Clear Lake PC*  
Houston, Texas

## March 23

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

## March 31-April 1

Unpacking Generational Theory  
with Karl Travis  
*St. Andrew's PC*  
Houston, Texas

## April 14

Good Friday  
Presbytery Center Closed

## April 16

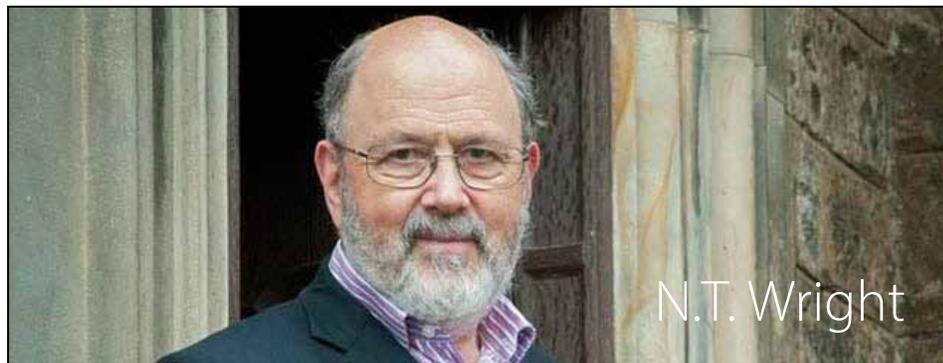
Easter Sunday

## April 25-27

Clergy Retreat  
*Camp Allen*  
Navasota, Texas

## April 29

PW Spring Gathering  
*Webster PC*  
Webster, Texas



N.T. Wright

## N.T. Wright

### The Day the Revolution Began

On March 21 and 22, Houston Baptist University will host N.T. Wright, former Bishop of Durham in the Church of England and now the Chair of New Testament and Early Christianity at the School of Divinity at the University of St. Andrews. Wright will be giving two lectures tied to his new book, *The Day the Revolution Began*: Tuesday, March 21 at 7:00 p.m. (“According to the Scriptures: The Beginnings of Atonement Theology”) and Wednesday, March 22 at 11:00 a.m. (“Jesus’ Death in the Gospels: Forgotten Dimensions of the Cross”). Both lectures are in Dunham Theater (7502 Fondren Road, Houston). Seating is limited. Register for free at [bit.ly/HBU-NTWright](http://bit.ly/HBU-NTWright).



BioLogos is an organization that “invites the church and the world to see the harmony between science and biblical faith as they present an evolutionary understanding of God’s creation.” It was founded by National Institutes of Health Director and leading geneticist Francis Collins. In his book *The Language of God*, Dr. Collins shared his personal testimony of faith in Christ and that science and biblical faith need not be at odds. BioLogos was created to continue Collins’ mission and brings together the best of Christian scholars to address questions of science, Scripture, and origins.



Francis Collins

The Christ and Creation BioLogos conference is March 29 through 31, at the Norris Conference Center (816 Town and Country Blvd, Houston). Hear from top keynote speakers, participate in a science-faith workshop, and more. You may read more about BioLogos at [BioLogos.org](http://BioLogos.org). To find out more about the conference or to register, go to [biologos.org/2017-biologos-conference/](http://biologos.org/2017-biologos-conference/).

# events and happenings



## Context for Ministry Matters! Discovering the Gift of **MissionInsite**

Please join us for the first of a two-part Fresh Elastic series offered on the link between mission and faith formation. Our presenter will be Ruling Elder David Coles from Pines Presbyterian Church, a servant leader who delights in helping churches embrace the potential for ministry in their communities.

Do you know how many school-age children are near your church, or how many single-family households are in your neighborhood? Do you have a clue about the education and income levels of folks in your area, or what diversities are present? How have neighborhood demographics changed in the last ten years, and what are the projections for the future?

In this session you'll learn how your church can get access to customized, professional-grade demographic information at no cost to your church. Use this information to plan ministry, mission service opportunities, facilities needs, Christian education programming, and much, much more. Our time together will include some hands-on examples of easy-to-do mission projects for local ministries and an opportunity to share how our congregations are involved in community mission.

Please plan to join us on Thursday, **March 23**, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Presbytery Center at 1110 Lovett Blvd in Houston. If you are a volunteer, paid staff person, teaching elder, or just curious, you are invited. It will be our pleasure to serve you lunch, complete with a beverage and dessert! Your RSVP will assist our planning. RSVP to [anne.aiko.wilson@gmail.com](mailto:anne.aiko.wilson@gmail.com) by Monday morning, March 20.

## CoffeeHouse LIVE

*Presents Terri Hendrix*

Coffee House Live at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (5308 Buffalo Speedway, Houston) presents Terri Hendrix and Lloyd Maines on Thursday, **March 30**. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. with music at 7:30 p.m.

Terri Hendrix is recognized for her rustic blend of rock, folk, blues and country, all bound together by her own unique brand of Americana. She's accompanied by multi-instrumentalist and erstwhile collaborator Lloyd Maines.



Terri Hendrix

Coffee House Live at St. Andrew's is a community outreach program, presenting live music in a family-friendly atmosphere. There is never a cover charge; however, donations are welcomed. For more information, visit [sapch.org/coffee/](http://sapch.org/coffee/).

## MEN'S CONFERENCE

# Navigating Life, Steered by the Compass of the Word: Marching Orders from Micah



Blair Monie

Men's Conference is a God-filled weekend in the wide-open spaces of the Texas Hill Country along the banks of the Guadalupe River at Mo-Ranch. The 2017 keynote speaker is Rev. Dr. Blair R. Monie. This is Mo-Ranch's single largest and longest running conference, where hundreds of men of all ages gather together annually for fellowship and spiritual renewal. Activities include keynote presentations, worship, song, relaxation, and recreation. A wide variety of educational and spiritual workshop topics will be offered in Bible study, church, mission, social issues, and personal development.

**Friday, May 5 through Sunday, May 7** at Mo-Ranch in Hunt, Texas. All generations of men from 13 years and up are invited. Under 18 years require an accompanying adult registration. Register at [www.moranch.org/attend](http://www.moranch.org/attend).

# Looking for a Study? Check out these...

## Resources by John Ortberg



### All the Places to Go... How Will You Know – 6-session DVD series

What is God's purpose for my life? I think I know God's will for me, but why can't I find a place to serve? I have many opportunities. How do I choose wisely and faithfully? This series explores the issue of vocation, of God's call upon our lives, and the many unexpected ways that purpose is worked out. These 20-minute video segments feature stories of ordinary people and offer a springboard for Bible study and discussion. This is a study that could be meaningful for folks at many stages of life, whenever they ponder the question: What next? DVD circulates with a copy of the participant's guide.

### Soul Keeping – a 6-week DVD study

What do we mean by our "Soul" – and how can we live a fully integrated life in which we live soul-fully each day? What are practices of Grace, Gratitude, and Growth that can nurture lives imbued with meaning and purpose? John Ortberg draws deeply on the work of Dallas Willard and the Renovare movement in this series that is ideal for small groups. The DVD circulates with a copy of the study guide.

### When the Game is Over, It All Goes Back in the Box – 6-session DVD study

No matter how skillfully we play the game of life, the game always comes to an end. What does it mean to think of your life legacy in terms of what really matters? How do we best make choices that matter, live responsive to God's call, and play the game of life with grace and gratitude? These 20-minute video segments with John Ortberg kick start discussions that are important at all ages, but particularly at midlife. Resource circulates with a copy of the participant's guide.

### If You Want to Walk on Water, You Have to Get out of the Boat – 6-session DVD curriculum

Building on the profound teaching of the story of Peter's attempt to walk toward Jesus on the water, this study deals with how to discern God's call, transcend fear, risk for our faith, manage our failures, and trust God more completely. Bonus materials offer guidance in leading small groups. Resource circulates with a copy of the participant's guide.



### Simple Sundays NEW (almost) Youth Curriculum Series

Simple Sundays are revisions of the popular *Faith Questions* series for Youth. These are little or no preparation required resources that fall somewhere between the original full lesson plans and the much abbreviated Coffee House Versions. The series is based on questions raised by real youth, and each topic is addressed in four to five unique sessions. Downloads are available at [pcusastore.com](http://pcusastore.com) for \$10. Currently available are: What is a Covenant?, Who is God?, Why Did God Save Me?, and How Can I Honor God in My Life?

# In our Prayers

## General Prayers

Youth and adults attending Presbytery's Conclaves at Camp Cho-Yeh

## Praises

Rev. Charles Teykl, HR and Sylvia Pesak McLelland - married on Jan. 27

## Health Concerns

RE Forbes Baker - First PC in Sugar Land and Presbytery's Director of Finance

RE Elaine Brasher - First PC in Sugar Land

Evelyn Darden - Mother of RE Sharon Darden, Coordinator for Committees on Ministry and Preparation for Ministry

Rev. Sam Fabila, HR - Pastor Emeritus at Biyaya Community PC in Houston

RE Shelley Hernandez - Pathways PC in Houston and Former Presbytery Moderator

Nathan Hurst - Son of Rev. Jerry Hurst at First PC in LaGrange

Rev. Casey Jones - Pastor at First PC in Pearland

Hector M. Rivera Perez - Father of Rev. Hector Rivera-Velez, member of the Examinations Committee

Anna Shively - Daughter of RE Kathleen Duncan at St. James PC in LaPorte

Rev. Carol Tompkins - Member at Large

## Deaths

Wray Webb - Husband of RE Gwen Webb of Westminster PC in Houston - Dec. 12

Rev. Wendy Bailey - Former Associate General Presbyter of Presbytery of New Covenant - Dec. 20

Clark Chamberlain - Former Synod and Presbytery Clerk, member of A Community of Savior-Servant PC in Houston - Dec. 31

RE Charlie Akers - First PC in Orange - Jan. 5

RE Star Starling - First PC in Livingston and former member of PW Coordinating Team - Jan. 28

RE Ray Johnson - St. Andrew's PC in Beaumont - Feb. 7

Mary de los Santos - Sister of Ellie Cole and sister-in-law of former General Presbyter Mike Cole - Feb. 17

RE = Ruling Elder | HR = Honorably Retired

## Abundant Thanks

By Rev. Mike Cole, Honorably Retired,  
Former General Presbyter

Ellie and I have been overwhelmed by the generous "love gift" from so many in the presbytery and beyond. We are grateful beyond words (which takes some doing for Mike) for the love, grace, friendship, hospitality, kindnesses, and prayers sent to us. Two months into retirement and we are still basking in the warmth of "send offs" we received. *"The Lord watch between me and thee, while we are absent, one from the other."* Genesis 31:49 KJV

For more photos of Mike's Retirement Party, visit <http://goodsoilphotography.smugmug.com/PCUSA/Mikes-Retirement-Party>



Mike and Ellie Cole at Mike's Retirement Party



Mike with Alex Lee-Cornell, Sara Armstrong and Rusty Edmondson



Mike with granddaughter Jillian