Hope after Harvey—A Service of Commemoration, Resilience, Restoration and Hope

Sharing messages of hope and resilience, our four preachers told of how they had experienced Harvey both personally and in their communities. The commissioners gathered to express their lament, and to find a sense of restoration after the storm. The liturgy reminded us that while we might be shaken and broken, in Christ all things are held together. The morning offering of $2,879.71 was given for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance who have provided for our presbytery after the storm. The closing hymn asked, “O, Who Will Build the Church Now?” The answer is ALL OF US, TOGETHER!

Rev. Barbara Retzloff reads “Bless This House, before presenting a framed version to our preachers.

Bless This House

Bless this house, O Lord, we pray;
Make it safe by night and day;
Bless these walls so firm and stout,
Keeping want and trouble out;
Bless the roof and chimneys tall,
Let thy peace lie over all;
Bless this door, that it may prove ever open to joy and love.
Bless these windows shining bright,
Letting in God’s heav’nly light;
Bless the hearth a’blazing there,
With smoke ascending like a prayer;
Bless the folk who dwell within,
Keep them pure and free from sin;
Bless us all that one day we, May dwell O Lord in heav’n with thee.
~Helen Taylor (1927)

Rev. Dean Pogue, Pastor of Katy, Grand Lakes, sustained damage at his home from Harvey.

Rev. Kathy Sebring, Pastor of Dickinson, First, whose building took on 4 1/2 feet of floodwater.

Rev. Debbie Cenko, Pastor of Wharton, First, serves on the Emergency Management Team in that hard hit community.

Rev. Mike Umbenhaur, Pastor of Orange, First, where both his home and church flooded.
Welcome, New Minister Members!

Rev. Jim Nelson transfers from the United Church of Christ, having recently served in Illinois.

Rev. Ego Mba joins us from the Presbyterian Church in Nigeria. She has a nursing and midwifery background.

Rev. Johannes (Hans) Poetschner has been called to serve as Pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Brazoria. He is transferring from Great Rivers Presbytery.

Rev. Suzanne Malloy, a volunteer with PDA, was in law enforcement for 30+ years before her ordination. She is a Crisis Chaplain in Santa Barbara, CA.

No photo was available for the conversation about responding to suicide.

Conversations Covered Response to Gun Violence, Suicide, and Disasters

Before the presbytery meeting began, commissioners had the option to attend one of three conversations on appropriate responses when gun violence, suicide, or disaster happens in the congregation or community. Thank you to the leaders of the conversations! The Presbytery of New Covenant has a Mental Health Task Force that can help in these areas.

Rev. Suzanne Malloy, a volunteer with PDA, was in law enforcement for 30+ years before her ordination. She is a Crisis Chaplain in Santa Barbara, CA.

No photo was available for the conversation about responding to suicide.

Rick Turner, a volunteer with PDA, leads a conversation about preparing for and responding to disaster. Beth Kauffman, presbytery Disaster Response Coordinator, assists. For resources, contact Beth at bkauff.man@pbyofnewcovenant.org.

From the Nom Com

The following people were elected to positions on the Committee on Ministry. Congratulations!

Rev. Margaret Desmond—2018 Vice Moderator

Calls and Contracts

RE Forbes Baker (Sugar Land, First) to class of 2019

Rev. Andy Gans (Houston, Pines) to class of 2020

Congregational Life

Rev. David Puig (Houston, Northwoods) to class of 2020

Rev. Dr. Judye Pistole (HR) to class of 2020

Examinations

RE David Coles (Houston, Pines) to class of 2019

Rev. Gwen Magby (HR) to class of 2020

RE Ginny Raska (Brazoria, First) to class of 2020

Professional Life

RE Bryan Campbell (Houston, St. Stephen) to class of 2020

We thank you for your willingness to serve. Nominations for committee service are welcome, and can be made here:

General Council Proposes Moving Forward

Working with the Finance and Personnel Committees of the presbytery, Rev. Dr. David Green offered this to move forward:

1) Staff—that the current staff remain in place.

2) That the positions of General Presbyter and Associate General Presbyter be closed.

3) That Stated Clerk Lynn Hargrove be named General Presbyter for a three year term, while retaining the position as Stated Clerk. The terms would overlap, but not be concurrent.

4) That a contract for services as needed be made to handle those issues that might arise that create conflict between the two positions.

5) To form a task force to investigate the location, cost and financing required to relocate the Presbytery’s Center Operations.

A motion was approved to place the presbytery property at 1110 Lovett Blvd., Houston, Texas, on the market for sale at market value.


This will be approved at the next presbytery meeting.

2018 Budget Is “On Track”

Treasurer RE Cathy Bliton (Katy, New Hope) reported that the expenses and income are at near 50% which is where they should be through six months of the fiscal year.

Rev. Dr. Brent Hampton (Brenham), Chair of the Finance Committee, reported that the presbytery may face some financial challenges in the near future when a note receivable from Memorial Drive pays out in 2021. The impact will be in two phases—a decrease of $110,000 in 2020, and $55,000 in 2021.

We are grateful for those congregations that give benevolently to the operations of the presbytery.

Synod of the Sun Offers Opportunities to Network

**Presbytery Leadership Summit featuring Rev. Landon Whitsitt**  
**August 17-18**

This event is ideal for Committee Leadership of Presbyteries, Futuring and Transition Task Forces, Search Committee and Committee Moderators

**Synod Sunday**  
**August 26**

Celebrate the mission and ministry of the Synod of the Sun. Downloadable resources are available here: [http://www.synodsun.org/synod-sunday](http://www.synodsun.org/synod-sunday)

**Imagine**  
**First Presbyterian Church, Norman, OK  November 2-3**

A gathering around common mission of all kinds to share, connect with and learn from one another. Keynote Speaker is Rev. Larissa Kwong Abazia.

**Connecting * Equipping * Empowering **  
**Synod of the Sun**  
[www.synodsun.org](http://www.synodsun.org)

Next Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of New Covenant is Saturday, November 17 at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Houston.
Vision Initiative and Lynn Johnson Social Justice Grants Awarded

Vision Initiative Grants were awarded to:

- Mental Health Taskforce $10,000
  Mental Health/Elder Education
- First Church, Conroe $2,000
  Community Outreach & Communication
- Spring Branch $6,750
  Local Outreach/Messy Church
- Northwoods Presbyterian $1,644
  ESL Program
- Heritage Presbyterian $8,400
  Previsioning/Revitalization
- Pines Presbyterian Church $11,000
  Feed My Starving Children
- FPC Dickinson $2,000
  Renewal Marketing Campaign

TOTAL FUNDS AWARDED $41,794.00

Lynn Johnson Social Justice Grants were awarded to:

- Presbytery Youth Ministries $2,000
  Youth Mission Trip
- First Church, Brazoria $1,500
  Child Hunger/Lunches
- Servant Savior Presbyterian $2,000
  Film Screening/Hines Center
- Brenham Presbyterian $2,000
  Community Garden – phase 2
- Northwoods Presbyterian $1,000
  Gun Violence Prevention
- Hope for the Nations $1,181.90
  Discretionary Aid
- Woodforest Presbyterian $2,000
  Homeless Hunger Program

TOTAL FUNDS AWARDED $11,681.90


Congratulations!

Tyler Henderson is being called as the Associate Pastor at Katy, Grand Lakes. His ordination and installation is planned for August 19.

Ruling Elders Julie Odle (Beaumont, St. Andrews) and Johnna Cormier (Silsbee, First) were commissioned to particular service by Moderator Bob Patterson.

Sharon Darden was recognized for her 50 years of service to the presbytery.

#GA223 Actions Summarized

Commissioners to the 223rd General Assembly are available to present to your group about the actions taken in St. Louis. Please contact Lynn Hargrove to make arrangements.

Rev. Jack Barden shares his impressions of the assembly as the church strives to “Draw the Open Circle Wider.”

CODA

Other actions taken by the presbytery:
- Approved the dissolution of the congregation of First Presbyterian Church in Eagle Lake, Texas.
- Approved readers for ordination exams.