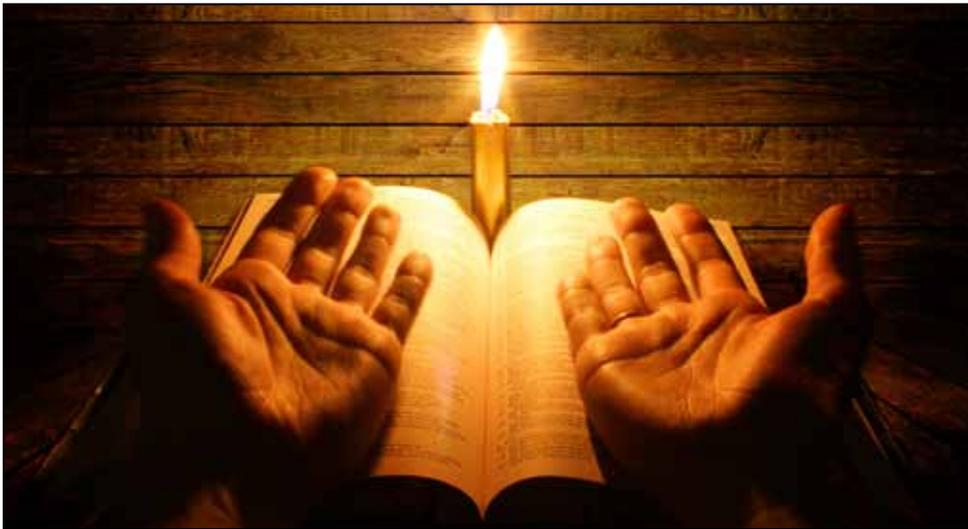


CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter of the Presbytery of New Covenant

Growing congregations that passionately engage their communities to make disciples.

Presbyterian Leadership Enrichment Spiritual Leadership: The Gift the Church Needs Today



New Covenant's annual Presbyterian Leadership Enrichment will be on February 17, 2018 from 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., hosted by First Presbyterian Church, 4647 Preston Road, Pasadena, TX. Rev. Dr. Joan S. Gray from Atlanta, Georgia will give the keynote on "Being an Effective Spiritual Leader" through exploring what it means to be a spiritual leader, some characteristics of effective spiritual leaders, and how we can access God's power to do God's will in the church and to the ends of the earth

There will be 5 morning workshops led by Dr. Gray, Rev. Dr. Laurie Kraus (PCUSA's Coordinator of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance), Elder Dave Coles and Elder Dianne Herrington from Pines Presbyterian Church, and Dr.

Paul Hooker from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Afternoon workshops will be led by Dr. Gray, Dr. Kraus, and Elders Coles and Herrington.

Rev. Dr. Gray was ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA) in 1978. Since then she has served twelve congregations in the Atlanta, Georgia area in a variety of positions. She is currently serving as Interim Pastor at First Presbyterian Church, Marietta, Georgia. Her educational degrees are from Presbyterian College, Columbia Theological Seminary, General Theological Seminary (Episcopal) in New York City (Master of Sacred Theology in Spiritual Direction), and Wesley Theological Seminary (Doctor of Ministry) in Washington, D. C.

Dr. Gray is the co-author of Presbyterian Polity for Church Leaders, and the author of *Spiritual Leadership for Church Officers* and *Sailboat Church*, all published by Westminster/John Knox Press. Joan grew up in South Carolina, as did her husband, Bill Gray. Bill is a Presbyterian elder and works as an attorney. Joan concluded a two-year term as Moderator of the 217th General Assembly of the PC(USA) in June of 2008. The Grays live in midtown Atlanta.

Join us for this annual leadership training event!

Whether you're newly ordained or have years of experience, you are invited to attend. Go to the Presbytery web site to register on-line or to download a brochure for mail-in registration to the Presbytery office by Monday, February 5. Cost is \$16 each which includes continental breakfast and lunch (\$20 each after February 5).



Joan S. Gray

This event is sponsored by the Congregational Resourcing Team of the Presbytery of New Covenant. Equipping Christians for life in Jesus Christ.



NEW COVENANT CONNECTIONS

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Making History Today

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

Who Will Remember?

Edith Bossey and Richard Farnsworth may not be names familiar to most who read this column. Edith was a member of Oak Cliff Presbyterian Church in Dallas for many years, and Richard was a member of St. Paul Presbyterian Church in Houston. While there were, no doubt, many things that distinguished their lives, what I remember about them is that each of them took it upon themselves to be a welcoming face in the narthex of their respective churches before worship. Week-in and week-out they would be at their post to greet visitors and welcome them. What was even more remarkable was that they had an uncanny ability to remember the names of visitors if those visitors happened to return a second time.

I suspect that both served the church in other capacities and did so effectively, but what I, as a youngster, remember is that they were always there. They must have seen it as their calling to be the face of hospitality. Because it was not a position that rotated among various persons, their regular presence "at their post" reflected a kind of stability to newcomers.

No doubt, there are such persons in many other churches that greet and welcome newcomers and visitors, but these are two that are etched in my memory and I am grateful for their faithful service. They may not make the history books, but they are making this

column.

I write this because there seems to be less and less interest in recalling stories about those who have made a difference in the life of the church. Might it be because we are so mobile? Or perhaps it's because there is less emphasis on denominational loyalty. Or maybe it's due to the fact that we live in what many call a post-Christian world.

The Presbyterian Historical Society of the Southwest is here to encourage people to remember and write about people like Edith Bossey and Richard Farnsworth. Much more could and should be said about them, but to a young boy who happened to be in the church they made a favorable and lasting impression.

Are there such folks in your memory bank, persons who quietly and faithfully made a difference in your life or in the life of your congregation? I suspect that there are. Why not write about them and submit your memories to your church newsletter? Or send them to me and they might appear in this presbytery newsletter. Maybe it was a Sunday school teacher or a choir member or a music director or a youth advisor or simply someone who showed up faithfully every Sunday and greeted you with a pleasant word.

Who will remember these folks if we don't?

The annual meeting of the Presbyterian Historical Society of the Southwest will be Friday and Saturday, February 16 and 17, at the Lake Highlands Presbyterian Church in Dallas, Texas. If you are interested in becoming a member of this Society, please contact Dr. Jim Currie at 281-991-8700 or jjcurrie5152@gmail.com.



Clerk's Corner

Rev. Lynn Hargrove, Stated Clerk
Presbytery of New Covenant

I had a fascinating conversation recently about marketing. In this day of social media, marketing for churches has become a hot topic. Congregational life spans multiple generations, and messages are received in different ways by each group. There are those in your congregation that don't use email, and prefer phone calls and printed mail. There are those that despise talking on the phone and want things texted or sent through some sort of social media platform. I wonder how many of our congregations have an intentional media or marketing strategy.

"Marketing is everything that the consumer encounters when it comes to your business, from advertising, to what they hear, to the customer service that they receive, to the follow-up care that you provide. It's all marketing and creating the decision within the consumer whether or not to choose you initially or for repeat business. Professors often define "marketing" as "all the processes involved in getting a product or service from the manufacturer or seller to the ultimate consumer." It includes creating the product or service concept, identifying who is likely to purchase it, promoting it and moving it through the proper selling channels." (Source: <https://www.thebalance.com/what-is-marketing-2296057>)

With this in mind, how do people find out about your church? How do you reach those in your "target audience"? Is it enough to have a catchy sign out in front? Do you need to have some attractive direct mailings? What is your product? For many of us, it is difficult to talk about why someone might come to visit our church. Is it for the worship service, or for a church program, or for a mission project? We get comfortable about being part of the church, but are uncomfortable talking about why someone else might want to be a part of that church.

If marketing is about "product, price, promotion and place", how do we adapt that to someone's spiritual life? How is the "product" defined? It is difficult to quantify faith, and to know what the actual product is. It seems that this is a big problem for marketing what we do as a church. "Price" seems a little easier, except when we talk in terms of "surrendering all". There is no "charge" to attend the worship service, or many other programs (except an "offering"). How would a value be determined? "Promotion" would be the tools by which one tells of the product and price. If we don't know what the product is, how do we know how to promote it? Direct mail pieces, email lists, and other tools can be helpful, if we know what it is that we want to promote. "Place" often refers to the distribution of the product. For us,

we can be limited by our buildings in thinking about place.

In the same article, three main purposes of marketing have been defined. These are to:

- Capture the attention of a target market.
- Facilitate the prospect's purchasing decision.
- Provide the customer with a specific, low-risk and easy-to-take action.

A marketing tool is the use of a "focus group". Here are some questions that might be asked in your community. "What are the three biggest problems in our community?" "How might the church respond?" "Name three churches in the community." "What does the name (YOUR CHURCH) mean to you?" "How can I pray for you?" These can be conversation starters, and offer some thought provoking insights into the needs in your area.

I know that these are not things that I learned in seminary. What might change if we used marketing principles in how we think about our congregation and our life together? I wonder if we might behave differently if we thought of ourselves as being in "customer service" as part of our discipleship journey. Would it alter how we follow up with visitors, and our own members? I wonder what effects we might see in our neighborhoods and in the lives of our members.

I know that I want to continue the conversation, and I hope that you might like to participate, too. Contact me here at the presbytery 713-526-2585 x 210, or lhargrove@pbyofnewcovenant.org

2018 Presbytery Meetings

March 17, 2018
First Presbyterian Church, Conroe

July 21, 2018
Pines Presbyterian Church, Houston

Next Connections Copy Deadline

The next deadline is
Tuesday, February 13 for the
March/April issue. Send articles
and photos to Lynn Hargrove at
lhargrove@pbyofnewcovenant.org

Services for Lent through Easter

If your church is having special services for Ash Wednesday, Lent, Holy Week and Easter, please send that information to Carrie Walker, cwalker@pbyofnewcovenant.org by 12 noon on February 12 for a special Tuesday Connect on Feb. 13.

The Tent of Meeting at New Hope PC, Katy

By Janet Rainey

New Hope Presbyterian Church, Katy

“Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp...; he called it the ‘tent of meeting.’ And everyone who sought the LORD would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp.” (Exodus 33:6-7 NRSV)

“So the LORD said... bring them to the tent of meeting, and have them take their place there with you. I will come down and talk with you there...” (Numbers 11:16b-17a NRSV)

These verses now have special meaning for the faith community at New Hope, Katy. When the flash flood waters from Hurricane Harvey inundated the church building on August 27, they lifted the vinyl floor tiles in the older half of the building (including the sanctuary and classrooms) and exposed asbestos-containing adhesive. A failed test for airborne asbestos and the required abatement/remediation meant we were, temporarily, homeless. Wishing to keep our congregation together and close to home, we chose to rent a “party” tent and erect it on the parking lot. We give special thanks to Rev. Mark Plunkett and the congregation at Heritage PC who, prior to the delivery of the tent, invited us to worship with them on October 8 (that was a wonderful service).

So, what has it been like to worship in a tent? It has been surprisingly meaningful – spiritually rewarding and uplifting, humbling, refreshing, reviving, restorative and, most surprising of all, fun. To paraphrase the US Postal Service, “Neither rain, nor heat, nor wind, nor cold...” has kept us from gathering each Sunday morning to praise our Sovereign Creator, pray for each other and our world, and give thanks for our many blessings.



Sunday worship under the tent.

We have learned patience and flexibility! We have discovered that we like being church “outside the walls” and “without walls.” It has put us in the midst of God’s creation; we have watched and listened to the birds, the falling rain, the far-off thunder, the swirling wind and leaves and, yes, even the nearby traffic. We haven’t wanted to roll down the vinyl walls and close ourselves off from the world. We have wanted to experience it all and we have dressed accordingly!

Our music and singing have sounded great under the canopy, helped by the fact that space limitations have forced us to sit closer together than usual. In fact, we have joked that when we move back into the sanctuary we will reinstall only the first five or so rows of pews! We have wondered if (and hope) our sung praises reach the ears of the nearby drivers. Music accompaniment has ranged from guitar to portable electric keyboard; on the windy mornings it has taken two or three assistants to hold down and turn the pages of music, and lots of paper clips to mark places!

We have sat closer together, and shared throws and blankets when it was cloudy and windy. When it was cold but sunny, we spread out a little more to the edges of the canopy and enjoyed the feel of the sun on our bodies. We sought the light! We brought our own coffee! We laughed more. When we forgot the offering plates, we passed

around a couple of baseball caps! We laughed some more! We held session meetings after worship, in a circle under the trees or canopy on hotter mornings, and on the blacktop in the sun on colder mornings. Those were time-efficient meetings!

We simplified things. We got back to the basics. As Balu and Mowgli sang in “The Jungle Book,” we would “Look for the bare necessities, the simple bare necessities, forget about your worries and your strife, I mean the bare necessities, old Mother Nature’s recipes, that brings the bare necessities of life... the bare necessities of life will come to you.”

Throughout this adventure, we have been blessed abundantly by members and friends who have set out and restacked the chairs, moved boxes of hymnals, set up a makeshift communion table, set up speakers for the guitar and long extension cords for the donated keyboard... It sounds as if we have come full circle from when our congregation was chartered 39 years ago!

I think we will all miss our outdoor “tent of meeting,” when we eventually move back into the sanctuary. This addition to our New Hope story (God’s story at New Hope) will, no doubt, be talked about and recalled for quite some time. It will be interesting to see what lasting effects there will be. Will we take advantage of opportunities to have a new normal? What workings of the Spirit will we take back inside?

Greetings!



Shawn Kang

My name is Shawn Kang and I have been pastoring here in the bounds of the Presbytery of New Covenant for almost 17 years. I have served in a Korean American immigrant church, and most recently, as the founding pastor of Pathways Church of Houston for almost 13 years. Currently I am serving part time as the 1001 New Worshiping Communities Central Region Associate for the PC(USA), and just started planting a new worshiping community called Mosaic Village Church! As you can tell my heart is

with new worshiping communities and revitalizing existing ministries.

I have been asked to serve in a very part-time capacity to work with the Evangelism and Church Growth Committee in the Presbytery of New Covenant to walk alongside our wonderful existing new worshiping communities and ones that God may be calling forth. Whether helping with discernment, funding or coaching, I hope to use the experiences as a church planter and coach to connect new worshiping communities with a wide variety of resources available through our Presbytery, Synod and denomination.

I am excited and humbled to serve God through the Presbytery in this way. The Presbytery of New Covenant continues to faithfully seek God through new worshiping communities and has been an amazing support, encouragement and inspiration to its members.

Let us continue to seek God's spirit which moves and guides us in these times of new possibilities

Adopt a class

Hurricane Harvey Relief!

The South Central Region of the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (SCRAPCE) is offering a special opportunity for Sunday School Classes across the Synod of the Sun to "Adopt a Class." These are the classes of sisters and brothers from a Presbyterian Congregation in a hurricane-impacted community, including places like Katy, Rockport, Port Aransas and Beaumont.

Up to \$1000 will be granted for each affected Sunday School Class to help the congregation replace resources, Bibles, supplies, curriculum, and nursery needs. Church classes who donate will be paired with a class at an impacted congregation so that they can exchange pictures, cards, and prayer.



Donations of all amounts, will be accepted anytime. Churches will be matched and grants awarded as requested between now and next spring.

For more information and to download a Adopt-A-Class Aid Donor Form go to the SCRAPCE website <http://www.apcenet.org/south-central> or contact Miatta Wilson at children@fpcdallas.org.

Welcome to New Covenant!

At the November Presbytery Meeting held at Northwoods PC, we welcomed Jennifer Marshall who was ordained and installed on December 10, and will serve as



Jennifer Marshall

the Designated Associate Pastor at Westminster PC, Nacogdoches.

Rev. Paul Kucera (not pictured) will serve as Pastor at Bethel PC, West Columbia.

Rev. Stephen Hill (not pictured) will serve as Interim Pastor at First PC, Huntsville.

Synod Mailing Address Change

At the last Stated Meeting of the Synod of the Sun, it was voted that the Synod would move to a virtual office beginning January 1, 2018, ending their rental space at the Presbyterian Mission Center. While the address changes, all of the contact information for the Synod will remain the same.

The new mailing address beginning January 1 will be:
445 E FM 1382, Ste 3-778
Cedar Hill, TX 75104

Reformation Challenge Awards

Congratulations to the following congregations who participated in the Reformation Challenge Awards. They are: Atascocita PC, Atascocita; St. Paul PC, Needville; Brenham PC, Brenham; Spring Branch PC, Houston; John Knox PC, Houston; Faith PC, Baytown and New Hope PC, Katy.

YOUTH NEWS

It's time to register for CONCLAVES!

CONCLAVES 2018

FEBRUARY 23-25 OR MARCH 2-4

Whether you have a troubled past, an undecided future, or are dealing with difficulties in the present, it doesn't matter at CONCLAVES. Christ will assure that you are not crushed, in despair, persecuted, or abandoned. Come reclaim the strength of your faith at CONCLAVES!

WHERE: Camp Cho-Yeh
2200 S Washington Ave.
Livingston, TX

WHO: Middle and Senior High Youth
(current 6th - 12th graders,
plus adult sponsors 21 and older)

COST: \$140 per person
Scholarships are available

Calling All Youth Groups of Our Presbytery!

CONCLAVES 2018: February 23 – 25 and March 2 – 4

Join us for fun and faith-filled weekends at Camp Cho-Yeh in Livingston this spring! Our Presbytery's Youth Connection Council (PYCC) is planning two retreat weekends, called Conclaves, that will enable middle and high school youth to grow closer to one another, connect with other youth from all over our presbytery, engage in small

groups, experience dynamic worship, and of course, have a blast playing games and making new friends! Youth will also participate in a mission project and explore ways to connect with God.

Details: Adult advisors are also invited (21 years old or older; ratio of one adult for every five youth by gender). The cost is \$140 per person

(includes lodging, meals, worship, fun fellowship and conference t-shirt).

Registration Packet available at: www.pbyofnewcovenant.org

Register online at: <https://www.cho-yeh.org/retreats/types/conclaves/>
Registration DEADLINE: Thursday, January 23

Conclaves Mission Project Dog toys, and pet care packages

Donations needed:

- Dry and wet cat food
- Dry and wet dog food
- Non-scoopable kitty litter
- Old t-shirts to make dog toys

Donations will be given to local animal shelters for animals who were displaced during Hurricane Harvey.



events and happenings



Happy New Year

January 1

New Year's Day
Offices Closed

January 18

Fresh Elastic for Stretched-Out
Educators
Resource Center,
Presbytery Center

January 31 - February 3

APCE Event
Louisville, KY

February 13

CONNECTIONS Deadline
for March/April Edition

February 16-17

Presbyterian Historical Society
of the Southwest
Lake Highlands PC, Dallas

February 17

Presbyterian Leadership
Enrichment
First PC, Pasadena

February 23-25 and March 2-4

Youth Conclaves
Camp Cho-Yeh

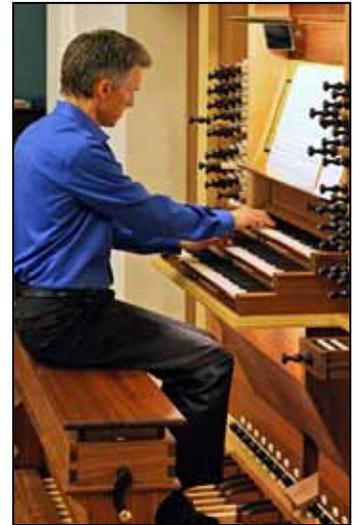
March 17

Stated Presbytery Meeting
First PC, Conroe

St. Philip Presbyterian Church at 4807 San Felipe Street in Houston, presents the next two programs in its concert series in January and February.

Matthew Dirst, Organ with Ars Lyrica

This Epiphany program on **Saturday, January 6, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.**, features the first keyboard concertos in music history, composed by G. F. Handel and J. S. Bach for organ and instruments and reconstructed by St. Philip organist and UH musicologist Matthew Dirst. Inspired by recent research into the origins of Bach's concerto, this will be the first public performance of these works that will be recorded at St. Philip in early January for later release on CD world-wide.



Solero Flamenco, Guitar, Voice and Dance

Under the artistic direction of vocalist Irma La Paloma and guitarist Jeremías García, Solero Flamenco, Houston's premier flamenco performance company, presents this vibrant program with artistic integrity and trademark passion. Soulful song, enchanting guitar, and exhilarating dance converge in this highly improvised art form presenting traditional, contemporary, and original works. Join us for a lively evening on **Saturday, February 10, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.**

All St. Philip concerts are free and open to the public. Concert Series donations are welcome, and may be contributed at any concert by cash, check, or credit card.

Comfort and Hope for the Journey of Grief

Mo-Ranch and Faith and Grief Ministries are combining their gifts to make this retreat available, providing you with a safe venue to wrestle with the dynamics of grief and experience significant measures of hope and encouragement. **Friday, February 23 to Sunday, February 25, 2018** at Mo-Ranch. The retreat will be led by Fran Shelton. Scholarships are available. For more information, <https://www.moranch.org/attend-a-conference/adult-conferences/comfort-hope-journey-grief/>



Duerr Lecture Series

St. Philip Presbyterian Church

Speaker for the 21st annual Duerr Lecture Series, **February 25, 26, and 27, 2018**, will be the Rev. Dr. D. Cameron (Cam) Murchison, Professor of Ministry, emeritus, Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, GA.



Cam Murchison

Dr. Murchison's lectures, "Children of a Greater God: Our Place in Creation," seek a recovered awareness of the Bible's summons to humanity that recognizes all creation is intended for praise. Murchison says our place in this greater arc of God's purpose is to participate in the preservation and protection

of not only humanity, but of all that God has made. With degrees from Rhodes College, Memphis, TN, Union Presbyterian Seminary, Richmond, VA, and Yale University, Murchison served churches in Richmond, VA, Knoxville, TN, and Blacksburg, VA, as well as serving on the faculties of Union Presbyterian Seminary and Columbia Theological Seminary.

Dr. Murchison will preach at the Sunday morning worship services (8:30 and 11:00) and present lectures each evening at 7:00 p.m.

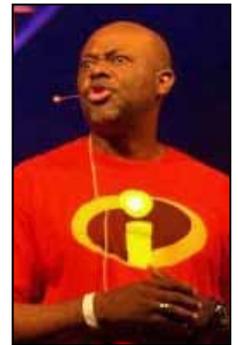
All lectures are free and open to everyone. Child care is available for each lecture by calling the church office, 713-622-4807. St. Philip is located at 4807 San Felipe at Loop 610. www.saintphilip.net

SYNOD YOUTH WORKSHOP



We worship, we serve, we play, we live in community! Come be a part of Synod Youth Workshop 2018 featuring Perryn Rice, theme enabler.

The Rev. Dr. Perryn Rice is the Senior Pastor of the Lake Highlands Presbyterian Church in Dallas, TX where he resides with his wife Terri and their children Jonathan and Lauren. He is the recipient of numerous awards and tributes. Perryn treasures preaching and does so with power and passion that he believes



Perryn Rice

comes from God. He often draws on his earlier experiences as both a stand-up comedian and rhythm and blues singer to keep his message fresh and relevant. His foundational basis for ministry is preaching "the life of Jesus Christ - crucified, dead and buried but definitely resurrected and living."

Synod Youth Workshop 2018

When: July 9-14, 2018

Where: University of Tulsa, Tulsa, OK

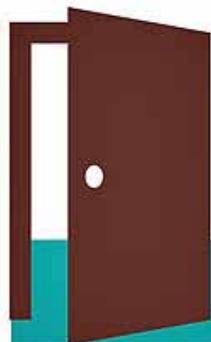
Cost: \$395

Who: Rising 9th graders - Graduating Seniors

Registration starts March 1, 2018

For more information:

<http://www.synodyouthworkshop.com/>



DEEP & WIDE

Boundless Hospitality

APCE ANNUAL EVENT 2018
January 31 - February 3

"I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me." Matthew 25:35

Explore this call to welcome all through unending hospitality at the 2018 APCE Annual Event in Louisville, KY. "Deep and Wide: Boundless Hospitality" encourages you to open your heart, your mind, and your doors. Experience interactive plenary sessions, worship with spirit and imagination. Resource-filled workshops and vendors with a variety of resource offerings. Pre-event options include Bourbon and Bluegrass; a Biblical

Interpretation Certification Course; Recipe for Church Inclusion: A Place of Belonging for Persons with Varied Abilities; Confirmation: The Landscape, Research and Possibilities and more. Event leadership includes J. Herbert Nelson, Jan Edmiston, Rodger Nishioka, Henry Brinton and more.

\$50 discount if you register by January 5. For more information and to register, go to the APCE website, <http://www.apcenet.org/2018-annual-event-louisville>