Becoming a Matthew 25 Presbytery

At the end of 2018, we chose to focus on these two verses from Matthew 25 for the themes for Connections, our presbytery newsletter. “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.” It seemed that these were efforts in which our congregations were involved – feeding people, providing water, choosing welcome, clothing, visiting the sick, and helping those in prison.

Little did we know that the denomination would be using Matthew 25 as a nationwide initiative to get people involved in building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism, and eradicating systemic poverty. This can be on a congregational level or on the mid-council level. As a presbytery, we would need to pledge that we would encourage 20% of our member congregations to be involved in one or more of these three endeavors.

As a presbytery, about 25% of our churches have already committed to participate in becoming a Vital Congregation. I hope that we are willing to sign on to the Matthew 25 initiative as a presbytery. Please contact me with questions or concerns.

- Lynn Hargrove

Approaching Racism

By John Hirling, Transitional Pastor, Saint Paul Presbyterian Church, Houston

On the morning of August 3, 2019, a self-avowed white supremacist killed 22 people and injured 24 others in El Paso, TX. A published rant attributed to the murderer spewed hatred aimed at immigrants and Latinos, decried “race mixing” and urged immigrants to return to their home countries. The Southern Poverty Law Center identified 1020 hate groups across the US existing in 2018, 73 in Texas. Any veneer allowing us to praise our accomplishments and ignore the cultural tensions ever present is gone.

I am blessed to serve a congregation that is multiethnic and

Continued on page 4
The Struggle that is Discipleship

Two of the books I’ve been reading recently are Lawrence S. Ritter’s *The Glory of Their Times: The Story of the Early Days of Baseball Told by the Men Who Played It* and Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith’s massive volume, *Van Gogh: The Life*. What I find fascinating about both works is the way in which many persons now considered “great” or “distinguished” hardly saw themselves as such. We seem to pale in comparison to who they were or what they accomplished.

Van Gogh had a troubled, if not traumatic relationship with his parents, his siblings, relatives, and friends. Seeking to please his father who was a pastor, Vincent tried very hard to pass the necessary exams to follow in his father’s footsteps. He then tried to labor as a missionary – in secondary schools in England, in the mining region of France, and then among the homeless in Holland at none of which was he effective.

His friendships foundered as did his love life. Even when he decided to devote himself wholly to art, he was never able to make a living selling his works. His parents, relatives, and friends considered him an abject failure. And yet, today we consider Van Gogh one of the finest artists ever. His works are shown around the world. Life for him, though, was a constant struggle.

Baseball played in the late 1800s and early 1900s was not what it is today. There were hardships that no longer apply today. Salaries were ridiculously low, often there were no fences and crowds would sometimes become active participants in the game, travel was difficult, and equipment was inferior to what players have today (gloves were often only what would fit on one’s hand – no webbing at all). And yet, those who played back then were willing to endure such hardships for the love of the game.

And even if we look at those who play the game today, we see only the results of hard work and sacrifice. Sure, today’s players have many more benefits that those early pioneers of the game, but we don’t see the discipline and endless practice required to make it to “the big show.” And even then, many never do make it.

At the opening of chapter 12 of Hebrews we find these familiar words: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, …” The writer does not romanticize the witness of those saints, as if they were always successful and never had to struggle. In fact, in the preceding chapter the writer describes what many faced because of their desire to be faithful to God: “Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, … Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword; …” (11:35b-37b).

The writer of this letter does not stop with words that offer glowing admiration and gratitude for those who went before. Rather, readers are challenged to see their lives in line with those saints: “let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, – looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of...”

Continued on page 3
Let’s Talk

I’m just back from Baltimore where the PCUSA Big Tent event where the theme was “Called to a Movement beyond Institution,” to emphasize our hope of the Gospel and its power to challenge institutional conventions. The goal is to come together and live in this moment, immersed in our current cultural context of racial division, gender inequality, and economic disparity to be renewed, refreshed and reformed, so that we may be sent out to affect change in our own communities.

As I pondered our local situation, and thinking about our various communities across our 39 counties, I was struck by how diverse parts of our area are. I have read that Houston is now the most diverse city in our country with people from just about every nation, speaking every language, and practicing every religion in the world. And, then we have small towns that might be “divided by the tracks” and have had a history of a racist past.

How might we have a conversation across the presbytery about systemic racism and our own part in it, and how we might speak to power to help to make the changes that would be fairer to all of the people across our area? As I read more about the Matthew 25 Initiative from our denomination, systemic racism is one of three emphases. I recognize that across the country that the PCUSA is 90% white. It can be difficult for pastors to find calls if they are of a different race, or for people to find a church home. How do we choose welcome?

At one point, the presbytery had a group that was working on racial reconciliation. We brought in a couple of people to train us, and there were a couple of discussions, and then it fizzled out. It seems that now is a good time to start again talking about this important topic. Many of us are seeing divisions reoccurring in our country with the political climate in our country right now with all of the rhetoric that debases those that were born with darker skin. Our brothers and sisters are living in fear for their lives in even doing basic daily tasks like going to the store.

I realize that in my growing up as the daughter of an Army officer that what I thought was a class issue was actually a way to discriminate. It appeared to me that most of the officers were white, and most of those who enlisted were not. We lived in different areas on the base. There was an officer’s club, and an enlisted club. The officers club was like a country club. I never got to go to where the enlisted families were housed or played.

When I moved to Arlington, Virginia for high school in the late 1960s, school desegregation had been happening for about a decade. One of the jokes at my high school was that the soccer coach went down “to meet the boats” to recruit players for the team, as most of the players were from other countries. My high school’s football team was in the montage in the movie “Remember the Titans” since we lost the game by such a huge score.

I have lived in Texas for more than 40 years, and I value our diversity. I also recognize that there are things that happened in the past (and might still be happening) that demonstrate our racist past. We can name some of the names, like James Byrd and Sandra Bland, and recognize that we had “sundown” communities, lynchings, and race riots. The more we know about from where we came, the more that we might repent and accept each other for who we are to begin to move forward hand in hand.

The Struggle... From page 2

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.

Why study history? Why take an interest in your congregation’s story? Why try to learn about those who responded to God’s call to work at Presbyterian colleges, seminaries, camps and conference centers, children’s homes, and retirement homes? Why bother to discover those quiet, hidden examples of witnesses who tirelessly, selflessly, and winsomely gave themselves to serve Jesus’ gospel of love and grace?

It’s not simply to learn about these people and express gratitude to God for them and their lives of service. It’s also to realize that, just as we struggle with the various issues confronting our times, so also did they struggle. It’s never as easy as it might seem. And we have the high privilege of engaging in the same life of discipleship that they did, following that one who “endured the cross” for our sakes. As we make our own history today, we stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us, and we are inspired by their example. Who are some of those who have made a difference in your life?

CONNECTIONS 2019

CONNECTIONS theme are these words from Matthew 25:

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”

The November | December edition, theme will be:

“I was in prison and you came to visit me.” Submit your articles with pictures by October 8.
multicultural. A large percentage of our fellowship are first- and second-generation immigrants. Our community includes people from Cameroon, Canada, Ghana, Guyana, Mexico, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Togo and the United States. Our worship, polity and community life celebrate our diversity and we have a core that want to witness to our unity. The Calabash Choir brings a rich West Africa flavor to our worship and fellowship. I’m told that Kevin Boyd, the pastor who preceded me here was fond of saying, “Look around folks. If you don’t like what you see, you’re going to have a tough time in heaven.”

This summer, our adult Sunday school decided to focus on facing racism. We used as our core: Facing Racism – A Vision of the Beloved Community (211th General Assembly of the PCUSA (1999)) and the subsequent study guide, Facing Racism – A Vision of the Intercultural Community – Antiracism Study Guides (PCUSA – Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries) augmented by these articles: There’s No Scientific Basis for Race – It’s a Made Up Label (National Geographic Magazine 2018); The Persistent Problem – Michael O. Emerson (Christian Reflection: A series in Faith & Ethics – Baylor University); Smelling Fires of Racism – Joseph G. Parker (Christian Reflection: A series in Faith & Ethics – Baylor University); Race, Power and Policy: Dismantling Structural Racism (National People’s Action by the Grassroots Policy Project; Fundamental Principles – The Poor People’s Campaign1 and Dr. King’s Vision – The Poor Peoples Campaign of 1967-68.

The National Geographic Article provides a historical lens on the misuse of classifying human beings in order to justify the subjugation of groups of people. We came away hoping to discover ways of discussing structural and systemic inequities that often disproportionately effect people too easily identified by religion, national origin, skin color, physical characteristics, gender, or sexual disposition without alienating those who do not share that religion, national origin, skin color, physical characteristic, gender or sexual disposition. In short, we discovered that structural and systemic inequities effect many people without those identifiers. Admittedly, some suffer more than others. But perhaps there is a way to transform the conversation from focusing on differences to simply talking about structural and systemic inequities that affect people – sons and daughters, brothers and sisters of the Divine, then seek solutions to eradicate those inequalities.

Naïve? Perhaps. But it does seem to be consistent with our calling.

Resource links

- https://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/110974.pdf
- https://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/110979.pdf
- https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/fundamental-principles/
- https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/history/
Advocacy is All About Relationships

By Rev. David Wells, Port Chaplain International Seamens Center, Houston

Chaplains and the Seafarers Center provide the primary personal and individual assistance for seafarers. We are recognized as the Welfare Agency for those who travel and work at sea. Most seafarers know we exist to help them, and they call on us frequently when they have problems. For the first time in my 21 years of service, I came upon a ship which never called us and we did not realize that they were in trouble. Even with 2 visits during those almost 3 months, no one had ever mentioned any problems.

A few weeks ago, the Seafarers Center was notified by the International Transportation Federation that this ship had been docked at Port Houston for almost 3 months and they were now crying out for assistance. The ship had been left to be sold, was seized and could not sail, the seafarers had not been able to get off the vessel nor go back home from the U.S. because they had not left the U.S. within 29 days and their shore passes had expired. I immediately went to the vessel and spoke with the ship captain to begin our journey to help them as advocates.

The captain told me that the request for the crew to go home from the U.S. had been denied by Customs and Border Patrol (CBP). As I tried to reassure him that we would try to assist, he hopelessly shared that he had given up and that he was sure that there was nothing we could do. After leaving the ship, I sent an e-mail explaining the situation to the chief of CPB who had assisted us in years past. The chief personally agreed to meet me the next day in order to see what could be done. As Dana Blume (Seafarers Center Director) and I spoke with the chief, he gave us hope that they might provide parole from the CBP rules so that seafarers could return home and the ship could receive a replacement crew. I shared the news with the captain and he said, “I wish I had called the Seafarers Center in the beginning. I had no idea you could help us.”

After seeing the stress of the crew and speaking to a Vacation Bible School at First Presbyterian Church in Sugar Land, I shared the story of this ship’s difficulty with the group and they prepared early Christmas Boxes which I might take to the crew. This very small act lifted the crew in ways which words cannot adequately explain. The Tiny Moments and small efforts which we make to assist others are always important and we thank God for all who reach out to help others.

The Seafarers Center and Chaplaincy is successful because of “relationships” which extend to every part of the Maritime Industry and for all seafarers. May we help ourselves and all seafarers to know and remember this fact.

New YouTube Channel on the Presbytery Website

Our YouTube presentations were recorded by the Congregational Resourcing Team/Digital Vitality Task Force. Go to www.pbyofnewcovenant.org/ and then click on Resources. Scroll down to PBY YouTube Channel to find the videos from “Ignite the Fire” and Fresh Elastic.

Additional presentations are from the “conversation” groups held just before the July Presbytery Meeting. These are “College Students and Mental Health” and “General Assembly 224 and Fossil Fuels.”


We will also be using Facebook Live to record future educational sessions and make these available on the Presbytery Facebook page which can be watched at any time.

Look for announcements in “Tuesday Connect,” the Presbytery website, and the presbytery Facebook page when videos are added.

To make these YouTube videos, we need (1) donations of new or gently used camcorders, (2) videographers who have experience with camcorders or would be willing to learn, and (3) editors for the videos or be willing to learn, using the appropriate software.

Please contact Lynn Hargrove at lhargrove@pbyofnewcovenant.org to discuss how you can become involved in this exciting project of providing opportunities for leadership enrichment and growth!
Spiritual Pilgrimage for Racial Justice

By Rev. Keatan King
St. Philip Presbyterian Church, Houston

Why a pilgrimage?

This summer, Senior High students at St. Philip went to Montreat for the Senior High Youth Conference from July 19-29, 2019. The Conference was July 21-27, and the extra days were for completing a Spiritual Pilgrimage through the South. Participants included Callie Bream, Elias Han, Austin Lippincott, Lily Maguire, Lulu Murphy (representing Servant Savior), Claire Steward, Joseph Webster, Keatan King, and Omar Rouchon.

We embarked on a Spiritual Pilgrimage through the South to teach youth about the sinful history of racial oppression in our nation; to study the brave individuals and congregations who furthered the Civil Rights movement as an expression of their Christian faith; and to pursue the work of reconciliation and repentance that God is still calling forth from the Church.

We combined prayer, education, and conversation around “holy sites” of the South which have played a role in the Civil Rights movement. Our goal is to empower youth to be active participants in racial justice efforts in the United States, and especially, catalysts for this conversation and work in the Church.

Where did we go?

- Baton Rouge: the Whitney Plantation
- Montgomery: National Memorial for Peace and Justice, a new national monument honoring victims of lynching; the Legacy Museum: From Slavery to Mass Incarceration
- Memphis: National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel where Dr. King was assassinated
- Little Rock: Central High School, where the students known as the Little Rock 9 attended and became the face of integration

In addition to these destinations we visited, we traveled with a collection of readings, videos, music, sermons, and poetry by civil rights’ leaders, artists, pastors, and peacemakers for reflection.

Beyond the pilgrimage, there will be opportunities for our group to share with the wider church the ways in which this experience has transformed them, allowing them to deepen their leadership skills in the church and strengthen their sense that they can affect change.

How are we transformed?

“I don’t think there’s anything holier than hope,” said Lily, when asked where she saw God in our visit to the Whitney Plantation on the banks of the Mississippi River. In a place which seemed utterly God-forsaken for its cruel, violent, and abhorrent history of chattel slavery, the youth on the Spiritual Pilgrimage still sought signs of God’s mercy among humanity’s inhumanity. Lily reflected on how remarkable she thought every enslaved adult and child was for continuing to live each day with the hope of freedom. Conversation flowed freely around the dinner table at University Presbyterian Church in Baton Rouge as Claire, Austin, Elias, and Joseph reflected on the museum’s existence as revealing God’s work in educating people about slavery. Lulu and Callie saw God reflected on the labor of love required to honor the dignity and worth of each of these children of God by name. Historians and curators of the collection searched ardently through receipts of sale from slave owners and other documents to gather and memorialize as many names of enslaved individuals as possible. This rich conversation represents only the first day in an 11 day pilgrimage to Montreat throughout multiple cities in the south.

Less than a week after the conclusion of our pilgrimage, a mass shooter ravaged the community of El Paso, not far from the banks of the Rio Grande in Texas. In his own words, he wrote that he denounced “racial mixing” and called on white supremacist ideas to express his beliefs. It is for such a time as this that we made our pilgrimage. The education we gained in museums must be taken into streets, schools, and civic life for the sake of racial justice and equality in the present moment. Our nation needs people of faith prepared to speak against racist ideas and actions, committed to the idea that each person is made in the image of God. We need leaders who refuse to believe this is just “how it is,” and who are living and working for the day when peace reigns. In a time of profound sorrow and unspeakable loss, may we join our youth in the holy practice of hope for our world.
The Church Apartment Ministry has been serving our Texas Medical Center (TMC) patients for almost 40 years. We are a coalition of nine church congregations who offer affordable, fully-furnished housing when patients and their families must remain in Houston for extended treatment for a life-threatening illness.

The apartments are located in three gated apartment complexes within two miles of the TMC and offer one or two bedrooms which are fully furnished and stocked with everything needed to cook and eat.

St. John’s Apartment Ministry

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The Global Circle of Faith in Medicine

The primary focus of Prayers Of the People (POP) is providing spiritual care to patients, families and healthcare professionals in the healthcare systems with whom it partners.

With gratitude to God, POP responds to the commission of Jesus Christ: “I was sick and you visited me.”

More than 75 POP Lay Chaplains are visiting patients in 34 hospitals and clinics in Harris County, Fort Bend County, Montgomery County, Polk County, Galveston County, the Republic of Singapore, London, England and Fortaleza, Brazil. POP is supported by churches, hospitals, individuals, and foundations. Together with their community partners, POP is able to impact thousands of lives around the world annually.

Currently POP is presenting before all an opportunity to join in the International Mission: The Global Circle of Faith in Medicine. It is an educational program established to support the continued education, training and development of trained lay chaplains. This educational program of POP is under the supervision of the International Program which includes travel to countries outside of the United States of America to train chaplains and build relationships with healthcare organizations. Trained chaplains may then travel to Houston, Texas for further education to achieve the following objectives: continue their education in chaplaincy at various size and type of healthcare settings; learn best practices as a coordinator of newly trained chaplains who will serve in their specific country, city, church and healthcare setting.

In 2018, in Fortaleza, Brazil, POP was able to train 90 lay chaplains and establish relationships for them to serve in four healthcare institutions; Unimed, Sao Carlos, Pronto Cardio and Casa Vida. POP has strategically planned the furtherance of that missionary work which is believed to be an incredible gift of God’s grace. Before the POP training, there was never a presence of lay chaplaincy in any of the Brazilian hospitals. The hospitals and churches were extremely receptive to providing spiritual care for the sick and suffering, especially for the poor.

Now, it is important to train 3 of those lay chaplains to be coordinators for all of the lay chaplains at their particular churches and the respective hospitals where they visit patients. The Brazilian POP Lay Chaplain Coordinators will arrive in Houston for their continued training; September 27, 2019 – October 12, 2019.

If you have any questions or desires to participate in any of the services offered by Prayers of the People, please email us at annemarie@popministry.org or visit our website at www.popministry.org.

Prayers of the People is truly grateful for all of the prayers and support given to our efforts of fulfilling the service entrusted to us; “I was sick and you visited me.”

St. John’s has added two new volunteers to their Anchor House Ministry who will assist in purchasing groceries and helping to provide whatever residents need.

For more information or to register for an apartment if you are in need, go to www.churchapartmentministry.org. Select and submit ‘application’ and you will be contacted within 24 hours. For questions, call us at 713-524-2640 or email us at apartments@churchapartmentministry.org.
October Rebuildfest

Local area churches are coordinating an extensive awareness and rebuild event in October 2019 to help families who are struggling to finish Harvey-related repairs to their homes. Harvey is a distant memory for many in our area. For thousands of families in the Harvey effected neighborhoods, their damaged homes are a daily reminder that the recovery from Harvey is “far from finished.”

Churches led the charge two years ago, responding with love, hard work, and sweat to help our neighbors in need. We want everyone to understand that the recovery effort must continue and that our churches are uniquely positioned to share God’s love with our neighbors.

This October we’ll demonstrate our love of our neighbor by offering our time and resources to assure that no one is left behind. Together we will raise prayers, mobilize volunteers, and raise funds to repair the homes of those who haven’t completed their repairs.

While physical repairs are essential, the service we provide rebuilds lives. We share God’s love with others because he has shown his love to us in so many ways.

What Can My Church Do? Pray!
Pray without ceasing for those who are volunteering their time to repair homes. Pray for those who will lead skilled and unskilled volunteers. Pray for the families we are helping. And pray that the physical repairs we are making will give hope to our clients as we share God’s love with our neighbors.

Send Referrals! Many of our neighbors who find their repairs “far from finished” aren’t aware that we can help them with their recovery. Please support those our area who have given up hope by referring them to Houston Responds.

Volunteer! We need skilled and unskilled volunteers to do hands-on repairs and to support volunteers on weekdays and weekends. Everyone in your church can participate. We need babysitters for kids, walkers to canvass neighborhoods, kids to hand out popsicles and administrators to keep our efforts organized.

Adopt a Family! The most direct way your church can make a difference is by adopting a family. Houston Responds can share the story of a family (or families) that need your help. Networks will supply materials and assist with project management and construction skills training while your congregation provides the volunteers and some or all of the funding for the project. Together we’ll get to know a family and serve them in a way we will both remember.

Contact Houston Responds at 281-201-3999 or go to https://www.houstonresponds.org/ to find the network in your area. We’d love to share details with you and plan your next participation in Octoberfest.

Is your congregation prepared to respond to the next disaster?

When facing a disaster, congregations are most effective at responding to the needs of our communities when working together. Harvey taught us that the most powerful predictor of resilience in a disaster is communication and coordination. Coordinated delivery of relief efforts can help us to mitigate damage, maximize resources, improve outcomes, and, as a result, more effectively love our disaster-affected neighbors.

Houston Responds is asking each congregation to send a representative to attend the readiness meeting in your region. There are two meetings scheduled. One will be held on Tuesday, September 10, 2019 from 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. at Crosspoint Church, 4601 Bellaire Blvd., Bellaire and one on Wednesday, September 11, 2019 from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at Member’s Choice Credit Union Community Room, 18211 Katy Frwy., Houston.

Visit www.houstonresponds.org/readiness to RSVP to the Congregational Disaster Readiness meetings. It is our hope that the partnerships formed through these meetings will lead to more resilient communities and the ability to expedite relief and recovery when the next disaster strikes.

Presbytery Harvey Recovery and Preparedness Updates from your Disaster Recovery Coordinator
Is your church interested in knowing more about the presbytery’s work with Hurricane Harvey, and how they can be involved and how to be prepared for future disasters? I would be happy to come and speak to your churches during a bible study, moment for missions or class.

Contact Presbytery Disaster Recovery Coordinator, Beth Kauffman at 832-438-4538 or bkauffman@pbyofnewcovenant.org
Our Presbytery’s Youth Council is back in the swing of things for the 2019-2020 school year. We have 38 youth and 15 adults, totaling 53 people from 19 churches this year!

Participating churches: First PC, Alvin; Atascocita PC, Humble; Brenham PC, Brenham; First PC, Bryan; Community of Servant Savior, Houston; Covenant PC, College Station; First PC, Conroe; Iglesia Latina PC, Houston; Northwoods PC, Houston; Pines PC, Houston; Pinecrest PC, Houston; First PC, Galveston; First PC, Pasadena; St. Luke’s PC, Houston, St. Philip PC, Houston; St. Thomas PC, Houston; First PC, Sugar Land; Webster PC, Webster and Woodlands Community PC, The Woodlands.

The Youth Co-Moderators for 2019-2020 are Sadie Smith (Northwoods PC, Houston) and Kyle Sowden (First PC, Conroe). The Adult Co-Moderators are Leah Lynch McFadden (Northwoods PC, Houston) and Mike Murphy (Brenham PC, Brenham)

PYCC delegation at Purdue University

53 youth and adults from 17 of our Presbytery's churches had an amazing week at the 2019 Triennium Conference. We met brothers and sisters from all over the world and forged new friendships. We learned new energizers, danced to old energizers, sang our hearts out, walked SEVERAL miles in the heat, played games, engaged in small groups and mission projects, spent time in the Word and made memories that will last a lifetime. Thank you to everyone who gave their prayers and financial gifts to this endeavor! You changed lives and we are looking forward to giving this opportunity to others at Triennium 2022 so that their lives may be changed as well.

Thanks be to God for the connectional church.

Fun, faith-filled retreat weekends for middle and high school youth are led by our Presbytery's Youth Connection Council (PYCC). The dates are February 28 - March 1, and March 6 - 8, 2020 at Cho-Yeh Camp and Conference Center, Livingston, TX. Registration materials coming soon.

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Youth Rally

Join us for Sunday morning worship “youth-style” followed by lunch, games, and a hands-on mission project. This event is an opportunity for youth groups of our presbytery to come together to worship, fellowship and make a difference through mission. Middle and High School youth and their adult sponsors are invited Sunday, November 10, 2019, from 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., at Northwoods Presbyterian Church, 3320 Cypress Creek Pkwy., Houston. Free event!

If you have any question about Presbyterian Youth Connection Council, contact Kristi Blankman, Coordinator for Youth Ministry at 713-526-2585 or kblankman@pbyofnewcovenant.org
Join us under the old Oak Tree

John Knox Presbyterian Church
11th ANNUAL ARTS AND CRAFTS
CHARITY BAZAAR

Saturday, September 21, 2019
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Come and enjoy plenty of great shopping, food trucks, raffles, Free activities for the kids, petting zoo and lots of fun!

The 2019 recipients of the charity bazaar are:
Raise Up Families - www.raiseupfamilies.org
Heifer International - www.heifer.org
TWRC Wildlife Center - www.twrcwildlifecenter.org
The HUB - www.thehubhouston.org

This event is FREE and open to the public. For more information on becoming a vendor, please visit our website, www.johnknoxhouston.org or email: office@johnknoxhouston.org, Office phone: 713-462-5448

Training for Better Congregational Discipleship

DiscipleForward is two days of teaching church leaders the core principles of fostering vibrant disciples in congregations. As pastors, discipleship staff, adult education staff or volunteers, attend this practical workshop together, September 25 and 26, 2019 at Houston Baptist University. Rev Dr. Brad Munroe, Pastor to the Grand Canyon and de Cristo Presbyteries says “Wow! So awesome. This was really solid material.” When you apply the concepts in your congregation, you will see improvement in many congregational factors.

Early bird pricing ends midnight, September 9. For information go to: https://www.ascendingleaders.org/dfh/ to sign up for emails and updates as more information becomes available.
The Presbyterian Association of Musicians presents

“Keep God’s Light”

Join the Presbyterian Association of Musicians as they present a choir workshop on Saturday, September 28, 2019, from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at Covenant Presbyterian Church, 220 Rock Prairie Road, College Station, TX.

The choir workshop will be led by Dr. Eric Posada, Director of Choral Music at Tyler Junior College and Director of Traditional Worship at First United Methodist Church, Paris.

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m., workshop starts at 9:00 a.m., and at 4:00 p.m., a Festival Concert ends the day. The cost is $25 per person, (includes lunch and music). Please pre-register by Friday, September 20, 2019.

For registration sheet and more information, please contact Christine Larsen, Board member, PAOM, clarsen77@gmail.com or 979-255-2014.

Craft Bazaar

Join us for our 4th annual Fall Bazaar at First Presbyterian Church, 4647 Preston Rd., Pasadena, on Saturday, October 12, 2019 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. We’ll have lots of vendors to visit to get your Christmas shopping started, or decorate for fall or Christmas. The Caring ministry will have BBQ for sale, and Deacons will have delicious desserts. Bring the kids to a free Kids Zone where they can make a craft to take home. The Pasadena Animal Shelter will be on site for pet adoptions. There will be a shredding truck present, so bring any of your papers that need to be safely destroyed.

A few vendor booths are still available, if interested. Contact Donna Gilchrest at 281-830-3176. For more information, visit the church website, www.fpcpasadena.org.

Upcoming Conferences

Mo-Ranch is a retreat center nestled in the Texas Hill Country along the Guadalupe River near Hunt, Texas. Here are some opportunities to get away in the Fall:

Couples in Ministry
September 30 - October 3, 2019
9 Ways to Wholeness: The Transformative power of Enneagram Wisdom for our lives and congregations Embracing the vocation of ministry and living fully into that calling requires all the energy, intelligence, imagination and love that we can muster.

Prayer Retreat
October 11-13, 2019
Daily Prayer with the Psalms The ancient practice of daily prayer offers a way to immerse ourselves in the mystery of faith as well as the experience of dying and rising with Christ.

Mother Daughter Weekend
October 11-13, 2019
Come spend a special weekend getaway at Mo with your daughter(s) ages 5-15. No cooking.

Small Church Pastor’s Retreat
October 14-17, 2019
Anyone who is a pastor of a small church – teaching elders, commissioned ruling elders, stated supply pastors, even student pastors – this retreat is for you!
Grounded in Giving

Recently Webster Presbyterian Church (near NASA), celebrated the 50th anniversary of Lunar Communion. Astronaut Buzz Aldrin had just landed on the moon, and took the Elements. We are proud of our part in this heritage, and celebrate every year. What we do grounded on this earth deserves equal recognition and celebration because this day to day commitment to the needs of others is the true soul and face of the church. Here are some examples of our missions:

- **Family Promise** mobilizes the faith community to empower homeless families to achieve lasting independence. As a fundraiser, two WPC Members rode the Great Divide Mountain Bike Route, over 3,000 miles from Jasper, Alberta (Canada) to Antelope Wells, New Mexico, which borders Mexico.
- **Hurricane Harvey** impacted our community in ways we still feel. Many homes are still in need of repair. We have teamed up with Fuller Rebuilders to welcome people from across the country who have volunteered to help. Together we are making a difference one week at a time.

- **We team with nearby elementary and middle schools. A school supply/backpack drive begins the school year. We provide meals to families at Thanksgiving and Christmas gifts. Schools impacted by Harvey received a special donation to help provide meals to students. We provide food for Spring break for the local elementary school; and provide funds to counselors to provide for the needs of the children under their care throughout the year.**
- **Community seniors** are invited to a monthly luncheon with speakers on topics of interest.
- **Our Mental Health Ministry** has aligned with area mental health providers for care and sponsored a 4 week series of speakers on the topic of mental health.
- **Griefshare** meets at Webster for those who have lost a loved one. Powerful Tools for Caregivers provides training for those supporting family members who are chronically ill.
- **Our Men’s Wednesday morning men’s group recently sponsored a successful “Soles for Souls” drive to provide shoes for the homeless. This group has also been at the forefront in helping children in the area with a backpack drive.**
- **We are active with Free the Captives, an organization to help human trafficking victims.**
- **Mission trips? Our youth recently went rebuild houses for people in need. Our adults and youth have gone to Peru to help build a church facility there.**
- **Our visual arts committee displays art in our sanctuary from artists from all over the United States to give a sense of wonder and peace.**
- **The Webster Presbyterian Church deacons provide gifts to a local ICU on a weekly basis; provides member contact with birthday celebrations and deacon zone parties; provide care before, during and after; arrange for car rides transportation for members who need it; and for church wide blood drives.**

Our celebration of the Lunar Communion was public and out of this world! Our mission of giving is often quiet… many hands doing what we do… Giving to others… on this good earth, providing food for the body and the soul.