

# PRESBYTERY MEETING

MAY 9, 2009

# POSTLUDE

## Per Capita practice continues unchanged

By Elder Jane Henson, Memorial Drive PC, Houston

The motion from the Session of Memorial Drive, Houston (MDPC), failed after a standing vote was taken, 95 for-102 against. The proposed motion, if approved, would have made a change in the manner our presbytery implements its current practice of submitting per capita funds to the General Assembly (GA).

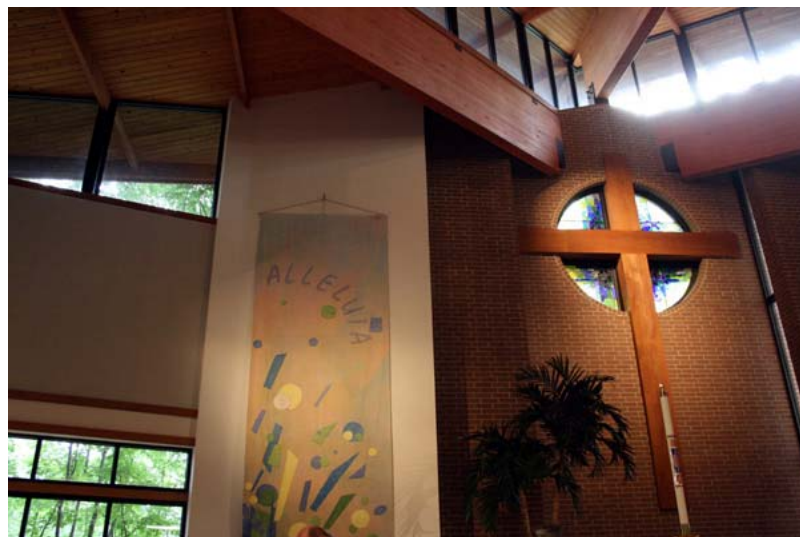
The motion sought approval to require New Covenant to honor any member church's request to withhold or redirect its per capita funds, so that the resulting shortfall would not be taken out of Presbytery funds and forwarded to PC(USA), as is the current practice. In such a case, New Covenant would not forward the funds and would declare to GA that funds were "not available."

PC(USA) annually approves a per capita apportionment rate set by dividing the total GA budget by the total number of PC(USA) members. Each church forwards its own payment to the Presbytery, which then—making up any shortfall any church

has failed to pay—forwards the total amount to the General Assembly.

The Rev. Dave Peterson, speaking on behalf of the session of MDPC, said that the motion was being made "out of concern for the church we love." He spoke about the hemorrhaging of

our denomination's membership, which has been met over many years mostly in silence from our national leaders even as the pace of membership loss increases. He said the proposal was made in an effort to get the attention of a national leadership which has



Sanctuary of Woodlands Community Presbyterian

failed to make a coordinated effort to stem losses either in membership or in missions.

A period of debate by speakers for and against the motion followed. Moderator Rev. Wayne Eberly prayed for the deliberations and then called for the vote.

## Morning worship through music

The choir and instrumentalists of Woodlands Community PC welcomed commissioners with music in a variety of styles and led the gathering in morning song.

The music and the beauty of the sanctuary, set amid the green trees of The Woodlands, focused hearts and minds on God's many blessings to us. Words from "God, the Sculptor of the Mountains" were the heartfelt prayers of all, as the business of the day began: "Shape us now...lead us now...feed us now...meet us now."



## Invitation extended to closing worship at Westminster, Beaumont

The Rev. Connie Alexander, chair of the Administrative Commission working with Westminster PC, Beaumont, invited all in the presbytery to attend the final Service of Worship and Celebration of Ministry of Westminster Presbyterian on Pentecost Sunday, May 31, at 2:30 p.m.

Connie praised the churches in the Geneva Cluster for their assistance to the church during this period. By prior act of the presbytery, this congregation will be dissolved, effective May 31.

## New Minister-Members to New Covenant

Extending the right hand of fellowship to new colleagues, commissioners welcomed four pastors to New Covenant.



Rev. Tom Atkins

Rev. **Thomas Atkins** is serving as pastor of St. Thomas PC, Houston. "I am excited to be returning to Texas and to my roots as a fourth generation Texan," reports Tom. He is transferring from Peace River Presbytery in southwest Florida. Tom received a MA degree from Salve Regina University in Newport, RI, and his MDiv from Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, GA. Son of missionaries to Mexico, Tom served as an active duty U.S. Navy Chaplain for 24 years.



Rev. Tim Bostick

Rev. **Tim Bostick** is serving as organizing pastor for the NCD in Montgomery Co. He finds it very exciting to learn about the things that God is doing in southeast Texas. "Already the spirit of God has moved among the people who are working together enthusiastically on this project," said Tim. "And I get to be a cheerleader for God!" He asked for the presbytery's prayers and blessings as they continue on this journey together. Transferring from Greater Atlanta Presbytery, Tim received his MDiv from Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur.



Rev. Andy Dearman

Rev. **John Andrew "Andy" Dearman** is being received as member-at-large from South Louisiana Presbytery. Effective July 1, he will serve as director of Fuller Seminary – Houston Extension. For twenty-seven years, Andy served as academic dean and Old Testament professor at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. He received his MDiv from Princeton Theological Seminary, PhD from Emory University, and Doctor of Theology from Debrecan Reformed University in Hungary.



Rev. Linda Mc Carty

Rev. **Linda McCarty** has transferred from Presbytery of Chicago where she was ordained. She is serving as Director of Faith in Practice, a validated New Covenant ministry that provides medical care to the poorest of Guatemala. Volunteer medical teams travel to remote parts of Guatemala to set up makeshift clinics in rural villages. After receiving a BA degree from Valparaiso University, she received a Juris Doctorate from DePaul University. Her MDiv was granted by the University of Chicago Divinity School.

## Commissioned Lay Pastor enrolled

Elder **Debbie Kleinman**, Indian PC, Livingston, was enrolled as a Lay Minister in the PC(USA). She will be commissioned as Lay Pastor on May 17 at her church.



Debbie Kleinman

Debbie has been a member of that church since 1969, ordained deacon and elder, youth coordinator, vacation bible school director, and Sunday school teacher. Debbie is a past Moderator of our presbytery and has been a leader at the presbytery, synod, and GA.

Debbie spoke about the devotion of her father and the importance of scripture that have influenced and informed her ministry. With members of her church and the confirmation class she teaches sitting nearby, Debbie stated her belief that God shapes and bestows discipline on his followers so they can be instruments for others to follow Christ. Professionally, Debbie is an elementary school teacher.

**Next Stated Meeting  
New Covenant Presbytery  
Sat. Nov. 14  
St. Paul PC, Houston**

## Thanks and congratulations!

Elder **Jack Morrison**, past Clerk of Session at First PC, Kingwood, assisted Stated Clerk **Diane Prevary** at the meeting in the absence of Recording Clerk **Janice Schessler**. Many thanks to Jack for his



Jack Morrison

service. This was Janice's first absence from a presbytery meeting in 18 years. However, her excuse was valid - it was the day of her son's marriage!

## Called Meeting July 14

There will be a called meeting of the Presbytery of New Covenant on Tuesday, July 14, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. for the following purposes: ordination examination (including sermons), consideration of proposed Restated Bylaws, consideration of a proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2009-2010, and other business as necessary to conduct the mission and ministry of the presbytery. Location TBA.

*Serve Your Community!*

**August 1, 2009  
A DAY OF SERVICE**

Register at  
[adayofservice.org](http://adayofservice.org)  
or contact **Patricia Brantley**  
**713-526-2585**

# Entering into covenant relationships with those in preparation for ministry

Four were enrolled as Candidates in the Presbytery of New Covenant. This phase provides a time for full preparation to serve the church as minister of the Word Sacrament.



Mark Plunkett



Lindsay Hatch



Shane Webb



Jane Pettit

**Mark Plunkett** (Spring Branch PC, Houston) spoke about how instrumental his grandparents were in his faith journey. It was while serving as an elder that he realized that God was calling him to ministry. After thirty years as a school teacher, Mark said he is ready to go “wherever the Lord leads me.”

**Lindsay Hatch** (Clear Lake PC, Houston) became an active leader in church when she was in high school, even serving as a summer youth intern while in high school. After college at Baylor and exploring her call to ministry, she entered seminary and has now completed two years.

**Shane Webb** (First PC, Pasadena) was born and raised, loved and nurtured, in a Presbyterian church. After college Shane spent a year in Venezuela and then a time Columbia as a Presbyterian peacemaker. He reported how an encouraging word, “Have you ever thought about the ministry,” helped to shape his decision to become a minister. Shane has completed two years of seminary.

**Jane Pettit** (Grace PC, Houston) told how the Rev. Harry Slye, her involvement in Young Life, a year at St. Luke’s Hospital on call for pastoral care, and her work in a local hospice center were all pieces that came together in her call to ministry. She came to realize that what she wanted was a community of faith behind her in her ministry to others, that she wanted to serve the church as a minister of Word and Sacrament.

The Rev. Robert Murphy charged the new Candidates to be ambassadors for Christ, to take the message to a foreign place, and to celebrate the Body of Christ wherever God places them - “start today.”

# Connected through Spiritual Practices

By Elder Pam Engler, First PC, Bryan

After a morning of business and celebration it was good to slow down and be quiet during the closing worship. The Rev. Pat Clark (St. Stephens, Houston) led the presbytery in a time that engaged both the right and left sides of the brain. Set against a background of trees outside the sanctuary windows, images projected on the screens and music from piano and oboe led the worshippers into a time of reflection.

Rev. Clark engaged those present in the spiritual practice of lectio divina, a practice that includes reading a scripture passage several times. After each reading of John 15:1-5 those present were encouraged to either select a word or phrase that was meaningful to them from the passage, to meditate on the meaning of the word or phrase for their lives, spend time in prayer, or just be silent and “rest in the Word.”



For the closing worship, Rev. Pat Clark engaged commissioners in the spiritual practice of lectio divina.

Singing of hymns, a time for offering themselves to God, an “eyes wide open” prayer, and a beautiful vocal rendering of the Lord’s Prayer completed the time of worship.

On the way to lunch one commissioner was heard to say “I was prepared not to like that final worship but I really did!” Thanks to all the worship leaders for providing such a meaningful way for the body to worship as they prepared to return home to carry out ministry in their own part of the presbytery.

## Presbytery Meetings in 2010 “Growing the church, deep and wide”

- Feb. 6 - Evangelism  
St. Philip PC, Houston
- May 8 - Discipleship  
Northwoods PC, Houston
- July 18 - Servanthood
- GA Debriefing, 3:00-5:00 p.m.  
Location TBA
- Nov 13 - Diversity  
St. John’s PC, Houston

## Ike Recovery Update

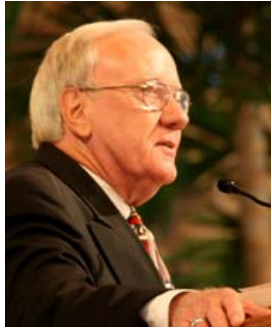
Ike Recovery Coordinator, Elder Kendall Boyd, presented a slide show that not only reminded all of the great devastation after Hurricane Ike, but it also illustrated the work of mission teams who have come to help in the rebuilding and restoring of homes.

“We need you to join the presbytery’s Ike Recovery Team (IRT),” said Kendall. “We would like to have representatives from every Cluster on our team.” To volunteer, contact Kendall at 281-229-1834 or [kboyd@pbyofnewcovenant.org](mailto:kboyd@pbyofnewcovenant.org).

Also contact Kendall for information about arranging a mission trip for your church.

# Two pastors retire

Surrounded by his family, the Rev. Clarence "C.O." Magee was granted Honorably Retired status after 40 years in ministry.



Rev. C.O. Magee

He was the organizing pastor for Tiki Island Chapel and pastor there for the last thirteen years. He is stated supply at LaMarque PC.

Remembering his ministry during the civil rights years, the Vietnam War, and women's rights, C.O. told the presbytery, "Changes come and nothing stays the same, but God always finds us. Christ is head of the church. Christ is in control."

After earning his MDIV from Union Seminary in Richmond, C.O. was ordained at a church located in the tobacco fields of North Carolina that had been founded in 1757. He worked his way to Texas by serving churches in North and South Carolina, Alabama, and Arkansas. God must have wanted him in Texas, for he has spent almost 25 years in ministry here.

The Rev. Rebecca Harrison was granted Honorably Retired status after 25 years of ordination. Rebecca says she was literally born into the ministry – daughter of a minister father and a mother who was ordained years after Rebecca was ordained. Rebecca talked about the great impact her family's actions during the civil rights era had on her understanding of Christ's love for all people.



Rev. Rebecca Harrison

Transferring her membership to New Covenant, Rebecca planned to settle into ministry here, but an interim call came from Metairie, LA. After a little more than year there, Rebecca and her husband found retirement beckoning. They are returning to California where Rebecca's daughters live. "So once again I am listening to God and ready to answer, even though I do not know what my future will hold," says Rebecca.

## Crosses to represent your church and presbytery's vision

Elder Garry Schoonover reminded each church of the recent letter sent by General Council requesting a cross from each member congregation to display in the conference room at the Presbytery Center where photos of New Covenant churches now hang.

Crosses should be 8 to 16 inches in height for a wall display. The material or design is immaterial but should be an expression of the congregation's faith and the connection we share in the community of Christ. We would like to receive the crosses by the end of September 2009.

# CODA

Elders and minister commissioners to the May presbytery meeting received the following announcements by presbytery agents on behalf of presbytery and conducted the following additional business:

- Heard the report that Amendment 08-B, voted on at the last presbytery meeting, had failed in the national count of all presbyteries.
- Postponed consideration to adopt the Restated Bylaws of the Presbytery of New Covenant.
- Heard a report from the Texas Presbyterian Foundation about Permanent Funds and Balanced Funds available for churches.
- Gail Moore, St. Andrew's, Beaumont, was recognized as a Certified Associate Christian Educator.
- The Rev. Kent Landry has been called to serve as pastor of Southminster PC, Sugar Land. He will be introduced at a later meeting of presbytery.
- The Rev. Jerry Hurst will serve as designated pastor of Heritage PC, Houston, effective June 1, 2009.
- Elected 12 individuals to serve on presbytery committees.
- The Committee on Ministry (COM) has approved that courses through The Institute of Pastoral Studies (TIPS) prior to May 1, 2009 may be used to fulfill the requirements of New Covenant's Lay Pastor Program. Courses offered through TIPS after May 1, 2009 will no longer qualify. The new requirements and options for fulfilling requirements for Lay Pastor training will be made available on or before September 1, 2009.
- Presbyterian Youth Triennium will be held July 20-24, 2010 at Purdue University. Congregations should begin to think about how they might help finance their delegates.
- Elected by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry to serve as readers for the Fall 2009 ordination exams - Principal: Rev. Kyle Walker, Rev. Becky Downs, Rev. Jake Gonzales, and Rev. Kevin Boyd. Alternates: Rev. Marie Mickey, Rev. Bob Murphy, Rev. Debbie Cenko, and Elder Jim Bushong.

*The Postlude is published after each stated meeting of the Presbytery of New Covenant.*

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