

***THURSDAY  
MAILING***



**NATIONAL CAPITAL**

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P R E S B Y T E R Y

**Missional • Pastoral • Prophetic**

***September 8, 2011***

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September 15, 16, 17 *sponsored by Transforming Congregations and Worship and Theology Committees of National Capital Presbytery* – Register on-line now!

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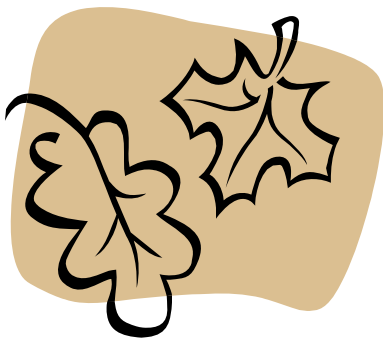
Office of Public Witness (PCUSA)

**Charter for Compassion**

219<sup>th</sup> General Assembly

## **Pastoral Concerns**

**Rev. Rhoda Nixon, HR**, husband, Albert Nixon died on August 27.



# **Birthday Greetings for the Month of September**

**Jim Adams, HR**

**Marty Albershardt**

**Alice Bellis**

**Heather Bobbitt**

**Judy Chan**

**Emily Berman D'Andrea**

**Herman Dykes, HR**

**Judith Fulp-Eickstaedt**

**Dan Holland**

**Minette Hope, HR**

**Kermit Johnson, HR**

**David Jordan-Haas**

**Casey Kaseman, HR**

**Jim Macdonell, HR**

**Jeanne MacKenzie, HR**

**Gary McMichael**

**Brian Merritt**

**David Milam**

**Roger Miller, HR**

**Hallelujah Son, HR**

**Ted Sperduto, HR**

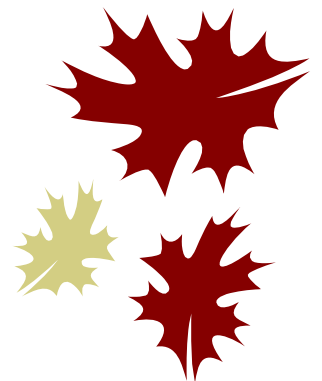
**Jose Velazco, HR**

**Dorothy Wright, HR**

**Eunice Yang**

**Chris Yim**

**From  
the staff of  
National Capital Presbytery**  
carla, debbie, dick l., dick m., howard, janet,  
jeannie, lajuan, and wilson





**NATIONAL CAPITAL**  
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## Announcements

**September 17 Presbytery Meeting Meal Reservation** is now available on-line from the homepage of [www.thepresbytery.org](http://www.thepresbytery.org). The meal is a choice of Veggie Wrap OR Chicken Salad Sandwich. Meal includes wrap/sandwich, fruit salad, potato salad, cookie, and lemonade/iced tea. The cost is \$10 per meal – payable at meeting registration. *By registering for this meal, you are committed to cover the cost even in the event you are unable to attend. You must reserve a meal by noon, Monday, September 12 (no exceptions beyond the deadline).*

The next **Fannie Robinson Black Author's Breakfast Book Discussion** will be held on **Saturday, September 17, 2011, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.** at Redeemer. The book club will discuss the book, *"The Warmth of Other Suns"*, by Isabel Wilkerson. The discussant will be Larry Batie, a longtime member of the group. RSVP to Carol Joy Smith (202 529-1445). Email: [smithseejoy@aol.com](mailto:smithseejoy@aol.com) or Juanita Robinson (301)-384-8756.

**NOTE TO CLERKS OF SESSION** The first Session Records Review for the 2011-2012 cycle is Saturday, **September 24**, 9:15-11:30 a.m. at John Calvin Presbyterian Church in Annandale, VA. The meeting is in the Fellowship Hall. A notice and the guidelines/checklist were e-mailed to the following churches: Bush Hill, Calvary, Capitol Hill, Chevy Chase, Clarendon, Community, Church of the Covenant, Fairlington, Falls Church, First Arlington, Garden Memorial, John Calvin, Knox, Lewinsville, Little Falls, New York Avenue, Riverside, Sargent Memorial, Trinity Arlington, Western, and Westminster DC.

A reminder and directions to the review site will be sent to those churches prior to the 24th. The clerk or a representative from the church must bring the completed checklist in order to have the church's books reviewed. If you need a copy of the guidelines/checklist, contact Janet Biermann at [jbiermann@thepresbytery.org](mailto:jbiermann@thepresbytery.org).

As this is a transitional period with the new Form of Government having just taken effect in July 2011, the Guidelines/Checklist for the September 24 review is the same as the previous year's, i.e. under the old Form of Government with citations to the 2009/2011 Book of Order.

The Stated Clerk and Records Review Committee will be reviewing and making necessary adjustments to the guidelines/checklist to conform to the new Form of Government. When completed, churches will be sent the revised guidelines/checklist to become acquainted with changes for the *next* annual review. If you have not already done so, we advise that you obtain a copy of the new Book of Order 2011/2013 as we are now operating under the revised Constitution. A link to the PCUSA website follows for your convenience in ordering. <http://store.pcusa.org/Browse-Categories?id=6567>.

If you are unable to attend the September 24 review meeting, you *must* attend any one of the remaining meetings (**October 15** at Vienna PC, Vienna, VA; **March 17, 2012** at Colesville PC, Silver Spring, MD; and **April 21, 2012** at Riverdale PC, University Park, MD). Please contact Janet Biermann by phone at 240.514.5353, or by e-mail, [jbiermann@thepresbytery.org](mailto:jbiermann@thepresbytery.org) if you need to reschedule your review.



## CLERK'S CORNER—SEPTEMBER 2011

**Dick McFail, Stated Clerk**

As the rhythm of church life accelerates in September and October, here is a reminder/task list of things to note.

In terms of your budget people who are working on 2012, note that the dues from the Board of Pensions for your pastor increase on January 1 to 32.25%. So on an effective salary of \$70,000, the exact figure to budget for pension/medical is \$22,575. As you might well expect, this is due to rapidly increasing healthcare costs for the Board.

Also as the Session considers the pastor's compensation for next year, keep in mind that the recommended cost-of-living adjustment for all ministers in pastoral positions is 2.4%. Keeping with the \$70,000 base, this pastor's COLA would be \$1,680. And the minimum salary for full-time pastoral work is \$61,494 for pastors not living in a manse.

As all of us live our way into the new Form of Government, make sure you as Clerk have the new Book of Order—leafy-green cover, 2011/2013. Available from Presbyterian Distribution Services (800-524-2612), and the PDS order number is OGA-11-001. In addition to the completely new Book of Order, there have been significant changes to the Directory for Worship and the Rules of Discipline.

If it has not already been done, Session will need to set its own quorum requirement (G-3.0203). This could be a specific number of ruling elders in addition to the Moderator, or a percentage in addition to the Moderator. Examples:

The quorum requirement for the Session of Blessed Be Presbyterian Church is the Moderator and six ruling elders.

The quorum requirement for the Session of Holy Happenings Presbyterian Church is the Moderator and 50% of the ruling elders.

Also, the next time your congregation meets, one of the agenda items will be a quorum for congregational meetings (G-1.0501). Your congregation may certainly keep the quorum requirement it currently has. The point is that this decision is now yours, not the denomination's. This is the opportune time to re-think this. If your active membership is 500, under the previous polity 50 people constitute a quorum, and 26 of them legally make decisions which are binding on all 500 members. Good idea/bad idea? Your decision.

About Rolls and Registers—the consistent advice we as a presbytery are offering to Sessions is for you to keep the registers you are currently using for the time being.

Questions? Contact Dick McFail, [Rmcfail@thepresbytery.org](mailto:Rmcfail@thepresbytery.org)

SOURCE HAS A NEW DIRECTION..."being the church in the 21st century,"  
*Resourcing beyond the walls of SOURCE*



***SOURCE Ecumenical Resource Center*** and the POINT Network (Presbyterians Organized in Nurture and Teaching) are forming a partnership to provide the congregations of the National Capital Presbytery with support and assistance in their Educational Ministry programs.



Your POINT representatives are individuals trained in educational resourcing with a strong PC (USA) emphasis. SOURCE will use these representatives to broaden their "service" in teacher training, program evaluation and development, in addition to providing curriculum consultants to the congregations.

**Your POINT representatives are:**

Billie Sutter at [billie@ucpreston.org](mailto:billie@ucpreston.org)

Jan Moody at [Jan\\_moody@verizon.net](mailto:Jan_moody@verizon.net)

Karen Werner at [kewerner11025@verizon.net](mailto:kewerner11025@verizon.net)

***Watch for upcoming opportunities for your congregation in the Thursday mail...we are here to serve!***

August 31, 2011

Subscribe free to *Leading Ideas* and read past articles at [www.churchleadership.com](http://www.churchleadership.com)



Heikes

## Mature Disciples Supporting New Givers

By Laura Heikes

My mother became a Christian when I was four. From that day forward, we were in church every Sunday ... almost. Stewardship

Sunday was the one day Mom encouraged us to skip church. Now that we are both pastors, we hope our people don't feel the same way we did. But we know they do.

Stewardship has become a dirty word. November brings with it the lurking threat of sermons on giving. At best, people treat it like a trip to the dentist: they sigh and try to imagine they are somewhere else. At worst, they go missing. Why does stewardship feel like a root canal instead of an invitation to deeper faith and worship? And how might we change that?

Last summer, I was appointed to Bee Creek United Methodist Church, a young congregation in the hill country outside of Austin, Texas. What began eight years ago in a living room is now a church of 400, almost half of whom joined through profession of faith. This means that half of the congregation either has no idea what stewardship is, or a vague feeling of unease related to televangelists they have seen weeping mascara and stealing from grandma. The other half thinks they know what stewardship means, but would rather be at the dentist.

So last year we shifted the focus from budget and money to people and discipleship. We asked ourselves

how we could help the congregation grow closer to God through practicing generosity. And could stewardship be fun instead of tedious? The solution occurred one day as I listened to NPR. They announced a matching gift for all first-time contributors. The phones lit up.

Our church adopted this "secular" idea. We liked how it promised to draw the congregation together for a common purpose: growth in generosity where everyone took a step together. New Christians were invited to make a giving commitment for the first time. Mature Christians would encourage them by providing a match above their normal pledge.

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**Among the new supporters was Ben, who joined by profession of faith in the fall. The match "encouraged me to try to give more," he said. "I had a set amount in my head I thought I could afford, but when I heard about [the match], I thought I could do a little more."**

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Seasoned supporters were personally approached to offer a matching gift of \$250 for a first-time giver. Of dozens who were asked, not a single person declined. In fact, several matching donors gave more than requested. Others approached us to ask if they could join the matching group.

The response far exceeded our expectations. The previous year, we had 75 individuals and families who returned a commitment card. That number increased to 91 with the new plan. In one year, we saw 18 first-time commitments. In a year when our membership grew by two percent, the number of stewards increased by 23 percent!

Among the new supporters was Ben, who joined by profession of faith in the fall. The match “encouraged me to try to give more,” he said. “I had a set amount in my head I thought I could afford, but when I heard about [the match], I thought I could do a little more.” Jennifer and her husband have two preschool children and a tight budget. They “liked the idea that our first \$250 would be matched. So when asked, we decided to put our contributions in writing with a commitment. We now put our cash in an envelope to track our contributions (we never did that before).”

Mature givers also felt involved and challenged. Folks who might be tempted to skip “Stewardship” Sunday were invited to become a part of encouraging the next generation of believers. Deborah and her family provided four matches. “Doing a pledge for the first time can be scary,” she said. “I decided to encourage new pledgers with a match to celebrate their commitment. There is a lot of blessing in giving.” Joe and his wife, who are retired, agreed to match a family. He and his wife realized “the Bible is full of examples where small beginnings lead to magnificent results.”

Would this idea work in your community? There is a danger that it could seem gimmicky and therefore be off-putting. Talk with your leadership about the idea well beforehand, and choose a matching amount that

won’t intimidate first-time givers, but still provides an incentive.

Also seek to have the pastor personally invite mature givers into the process. Share with them how people reach their giving potential slowly, and the first step is the hardest. Help them see how they can help, and then ask for their support.

Remember, your mature givers are not always your largest donors. In our church, matches came from families at a variety of income levels, from construction workers and retired teachers to business executives. One told me the reason she gave is “because you asked me. If I had just heard it in church, I probably would have not done anything.” After agreeing to match one person, she ended up sending a check for four!

Stewardship should be an invitation to worship, joy, and thanksgiving. And why shouldn’t it be fun? Last year at our church, it was. May you also find new ways to invite people, at whatever stage they are in their faith, to grow in their generosity. ✚

*Laura Heikes (laura@beecreekumc.org) is pastor of Bee Creek United Methodist Church in Spicewood, Texas. She participated in the Lewis Center for Church Leadership’s Lewis Fellows leadership development program for young clergy in 2008 – 2009.*



## Learn how to fund your ministry in these changing times

The latest DVD/CD Resource from the *Funding Your Congregation’s Vision* program brings the best information and tools from the Lewis Center’s Funding Conference directly to you and your congregation. [www.churchleadership.com/funding](http://www.churchleadership.com/funding)

Subscribe free to *Leading Ideas* and read past articles at [www.churchleadership.com](http://www.churchleadership.com)

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911unitywalk.org

Past Speakers Have  
included  
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Tutu Institute for Prayer  
and Pilgrimage

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Ahmed**

Ibn Khaldun Chair of  
Islamic Studies  
American University

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Washington

**Senior Rabbi Bruce  
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**Imam Mahdi Brey**

Muslim American Society

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Jewish Life Network

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# 9/11 UNITY WALK

**About the Walk: Sunday, 11 September 2011, the Tenth Anniversary of 9/11 !**

Reminiscent of Gandhi's Walks, hundreds will gather along Washington, DC's Embassy Row building bridges of respect as a model for the world. Born out of the tragedies of 9/11 and with a burning desire to learn, congregations from a dozen faith traditions will open their doors for hospitality and prayer. Walkers listen to moving speeches from international figures like **Arun Gandhi** and NPR's *Interfaith Voices* host, **Maureen Fiedler**. Award winning author **Karen Armstrong** will be a featured speaker this year! Walkers will also engage in thought provoking dialogue, and learn about youth-oriented interfaith service projects.

- Hear [Desmond Tutu speak on the Unity Walk](#).
- Visit [www.911unitywalk.org](http://www.911unitywalk.org) or Facebook at [www.facebook.com/911unitywalk](http://www.facebook.com/911unitywalk) or Twitter at [www.twitter.com/911unitywalk](http://www.twitter.com/911unitywalk)
- Our Unity Walk partners include the [Berkley Center of Georgetown University](#) and the [Tony Blair Faith Foundation](#).
- View clip of the walk from previous years: (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOVTGOaJeBE>)

## Imagine the Possibilities

*Imagine the sound of the Muslim Call to Prayer and "Amazing Grace" inside Washington's largest synagogue. Imagine Jewish cantors singing and Christian Evangelicals preaching over loudspeakers at the Islamic Center. And, Arun Gandhi leading a procession from the mosque to his grandfather's memorial.*

## Moving Forward: 2011 Unity Walk's message is "From Different Walks, We Serve as One"

The Unity Walk has broadened its impact by establishing year-round youth led service projects through the **Interfaith Youth Action Group (IYAG)**. Youth of all faiths come together for major service projects while learning about each other. These opportunities to serve together create lasting friendships, but also are integral to Unity Walk expansion to cities around the world.

- **Registration begins at 1:00 p.m. Sunday, 11 September at Washington Hebrew Congregation** (Macomb Avenue & Massachusetts Avenue, NW; parking on side streets; Metro connections: Red Line to Dupont Circle; transfer to the N6 bus, taken in front of the Embassy Row Hotel; get off at Macomb and Mass. Ave.).
- **Welcome Ceremony & Program begins at 1:30 p.m.**
- **The Walk begins at 2:00 p.m.**

From the Hebrew Congregation, the Walk proceeds down Embassy Row with optional stops enroute at worship houses on Mass. Ave. A brief program at the **Islamic Center of Washington DC** is followed by a concluding ceremony at the **Gandhi Memorial**.

**For additional info, contact Kyle Poole 202-262-2181 or [Kyle@911unitywalk.org](mailto:Kyle@911unitywalk.org)**



Transforming Congregations  
and Worship and Theology  
is pleased to sponsor

**Anthony B. Robinson**  
**Just Lead!**  
**September 15, 16, 17**



**About Anthony B. Robinson**

Tony is an ordained Minister of the United Church of Christ, who has served four congregations. His present ministry is a multi-faceted one. He travels throughout North America as a speaker, teacher, preacher, consultant and coach serving congregations and their leaders. He is the President of [Congregational Leadership Northwest](http://www.congregationalleadershipnorthwest.org), a Seattle-based ecumenical group that offers leadership education and support for congregational leaders.

Tony is the author of ten books, including *Transforming Congregational Culture*, *Stewardship for Vital Congregations*, and *Called to Be Church: The Book of Acts for a New Day*. He is also a frequent contributor to various magazines and journals, including *The Christian Century*, *Congregations*, and *Journal for Preachers*. He also writes regularly for several on-line sites including [Crosscut.com](http://www.crosscut.com) and Faith and Leadership at Duke Divinity School. For more information, visit his website at [anthonybrobinson.com](http://anthonybrobinson.com).

**The Urgency of Leadership and Building the Leadership Team**

*Thursday Evening, September 15  
7:30-9:30 PM*

*For All Church Leaders*

*Falls Church Presbyterian Church*

This seminar might also be called, "Does Your Congregation Want a Leader? You're Sure?" Learn the hallmarks and the challenges of faithful leadership in the local congregation.

*Cost: Free*

*Reservations not necessary*

**Leading Change and Living to Tell the Story**

*Friday, September 16*

*9:30 AM – 2:30 PM*

*For Clergy, Staff, and Other Church Leaders*

*Falls Church Presbyterian Church*

This day-long event will focus on the nature of leadership. You will learn about:

- Seven strategies for congregational leadership
- Finding purpose and clarity about mission
- Engaging in conflict that matters and leads to growth

*Click [here](#) for on-line registration. \$30 for the first church member, \$15 for additional participants from the same church. Register by September 7 to have boxed lunch provided. After September 7 and registration at the door, please bring your own lunch.*

**Getting God at the Center of Your Church's Life and Message**

*Saturday, September 17*

*Presbytery Keynote Address*

*Fairfax Presbyterian Church*

Vital congregations are places where people actually encounter the living God rather than only hearing rallying cries to do/be good. Learn how faithful congregations provide space and opportunity to come into contact with the living God.

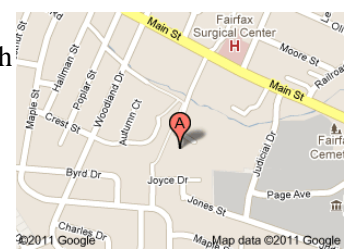
*Cost: Free*

*The presbytery docket will be posted at [www.thepresbytery.org](http://www.thepresbytery.org) by September 6.*

**Venues**

**Saturday**

Fairfax Presbyterian Church  
10723 Main Street  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
(703) 273-5300



**Thursday/Friday**

Falls Church  
Presbyterian Church  
225 E Broad St  
Falls Church, VA 22046  
703-532-6518



**Questions?** Please contact Carla Gorrell, Associate General Presbyter of National Capital Presbytery, 240-514-5348, [cgorrell@thepresbytery.org](mailto:cgorrell@thepresbytery.org)

## **SEMINAR ON HOMOSEXUALITY AND THE BIBLE TO BE HELD AT WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Westminster Presbyterian Church DC, an open and inclusive congregation located at 400 I Street, SW, will present a Seminar **“The Scrolls Revealed! Homosexuality and the Bible: An In-depth Study.”** The Seminar will be held on Saturday, October 8, 2011 at the church with registration starting at 9:30am, and the Seminar beginning at 10:00am till 4:00pm with a lunch break.

The intent of the Seminar is to show that the bible does not condemn homosexuality as some churches continue to teach. In order to better understand certain scriptures, participants will look at Ancient Scrolls through the influences of ancient Middle Eastern traditions, Hebrew tradition, Greek and Roman traditions, and early Christian situations, with emphasis on true translations instead of mis-guided and false interpretations.

The syllabus for the Seminar includes: Matthew 19:16-24; Historical-Critical Reading vs. Literal Reading; It’s wrong to pick and choose scripture; Our destiny as Christians; Defining Sexuality; Defining Spirituality; Going from In-headment to Embodiment; Challenging scripture; Translation vs. Interpretation; Forming a definition; Deuteronomy 23:17-18; Genesis 18,19 – The Sodom Story; Judges 19:14-25; What other scriptures say about Sodom; Leviticus – The Holiness Codes; All those abominations; Deuteronomy 22:22-23; The Romans and their Pederasts; Matthew 8:5-10, 13; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 1:8-11.

Facilitator for the Seminar will be the Reverend Harry Stock. He completed five years of study in the West Virginia School of Religion, received a BA Degree from West Virginia University, and received a Masters of Divinity Degree from Virginia Theological Seminary. He was ordained an Episcopal Priest in 1981 and later transferred his credentials to the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches and was ordained in UFMCC in 1991. He served as Pastor of the Church of the Disciples, MCC, for fourteen years and served on the faculty of Samaritan Institute of Religious Studies for ten years where he taught “Homosexuality and the Bible” and “Introduction to Sexuality Studies.” He is currently serving as Parish Partner at Westminster Church.

Registration for the Seminar is \$20.00 and includes lunch and a binder with all working materials. For further information, or to register for the Seminar, call 202-484-7700 or email Co-Pastor Ruth Hamilton at [rwh@westminsterdc.org](mailto:rwh@westminsterdc.org) .

## **Opportunity for Pastors with one of America's Great Preachers: Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie**

On October 11-13, 2011, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie will be offering his last *Preaching with Passion* Seminar and we want you to be there.

Dr. Ogilvie's seminar brings together the fruit of his many years as Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood, CA including a decade of his nationally televised weekly broadcast *Let God Love You*, followed by his years of service as Chaplain to the United States Senate, along with his 52 books, stimulating Christian preachers and lay people alike.

This makes Dr. Ogilvie's seminar all the more a treasure. It's a chance to learn from the spiritual life, leadership and practices of someone who has been called "one of the finest preachers in the English language."

In addition, you will benefit from the wisdom of:

Dr. Barry Black, current Chaplain to the U.S. Senate

Dr. Peter James, Pastor of Vienna Presbyterian Church, Vienna, Virginia

Dr. John Yates, Rector of the Falls Church, Falls Church, Virginia

Rev. Elizabeth Brookens-Sturman, Pastor of Brambleton Presbyterian Church, Virginia

Dr. Rob Perkins, Pastor of Newton Presbyterian Church, Newton, Massachusetts

Dr. Cynthia Coats, Psychological/Spiritual Counselor

Dr. Mark Labberton, Director of the Ogilvie Institute of Preaching, Fuller Seminary

**The seminar will be held at Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church in Bethesda, Maryland. The registration fee is \$200 for this three-day conference, including four meals and snacks.**

REGISTER NOW at: [www.ogilvieinstitute.org/conferences](http://www.ogilvieinstitute.org/conferences) . Scholarships are available.

Office of Public Witness - Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
100 Maryland Ave NE, Suite 410, Washington DC 20002  
CONTACT: Annette Greer 202-543-1126 [ga\\_washington\\_office@pcusa.org](mailto:ga_washington_office@pcusa.org)

## **SECOND TUESDAY 2011**

### **September - December Schedule**

- **September 13, 2011**

**10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. – “Policy Threats to the Environment”**

**Speaker – Tyler Edgar  
Associate Director, NCC Eco-Justice Programs**

**10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. - “An Update on the Federal Budget and Deficit Reduction Process this Fall”**

**Speaker – Leslie Woods  
OPW Rep., Domestic Poverty & Environmental Issues**

**11:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon – “Palestine and Membership at the UN September 2011”**

**Speaker- Rev. W. Mark Koenig  
Director, Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations**

- **October 11, 2011**

**10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. – “Super Budgets Call for Super Prayer!”**

**Speaker – Douglas G. Grace, M.Div., S.T.M.  
Coordinator, Ecumenical Advocacy Days**

**11:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon – “International Budget Issues”**

**Speaker – Martin Shupak  
Director of Advocacy, Washington Public Policy Staff, Church World Service**

- **November and December 2011**

**There will not be a Second Tuesday Event in November or December.**



August 2011

To all congregations in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

One of the actions taken by last summer's 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was to affirm the Charter for Compassion (<http://oga.pcusa.org/publications/charterForCompassion.pdf>).

The charter is the product of a multi-faith, web-based collaboration. It was created in response to growing misunderstandings, misrepresentations, and, thus, increased hostility between religious traditions around the world. The charter calls for treating each human person with “justice, equity and respect” out of deep compassion for each; teaching appreciation for cultural and religious differences; and nurturing “informed empathy” with those who suffer.

The charter's emphasis on the role of compassion in motivating response to the suffering of any others is fully consistent with the biblical tradition and Reformed theology. Our *Book of Order* reminds us of the role of compassion in the life of followers of Jesus:

“... In daily life, Jesus took ordinary acts of human compassion— healing the sick, feeding the hungry, washing feet—and translated them into ways of serving God” (W-1.2004).

“God sends the church in the power of the Holy Spirit to exercise compassion in the world,

- “a. feeding the hungry,
- “b. comforting the grieving,
- “c. caring for the sick,
- “d. visiting the prisoners,
- “e. freeing the captives,
- “f. sheltering the homeless,
- “g. befriending the lonely”(W-7.3001).

“... Concern for the world may be enacted in prayer and ministries of compassion, justice, peacemaking, and witness” (W-3.5302).

“Discipleship may be expressed ... beyond the church cooperating with all who work for compassion and reconciliation” (W-4.3002).

The charter’s call for a positive response to religious and cultural differences echoes the long-time Presbyterian support for basic human rights, including the right to determine one’s own beliefs and participate in the religious community of one’s choosing. In 1949, the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America endorsed the UN Declaration of Human Rights, beginning an ongoing series of declarations by assemblies in the area of human rights, including religious rights, that continues to this day.

The *Book of Order* affirms the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s commitment to taking a positive approach to cultural and religious differences:

“The mission of God pertains not only to the Church but also to people everywhere and to all creation” (F-1.0404).

“The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at all levels seeks new opportunities for conversation and understanding with non-Christian religious entities” (G-5.0102).

General Assemblies provide practical and theological guidance for such efforts. Presbyterians, congregations, mid councils, and General Assembly programs resist forces of division that seize on our God-given diversity to spread misunderstanding and mistrust. We affirm that humanity is bound together. We work for peace. We live with compassion. And we witness to our faith in Jesus Christ who calls us to love God and love our neighbors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gradye Parsons".

The Rev. Gradye Parsons  
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)