

THURSDAY MAILING



National Capital
P R E S B Y T E R Y
MISSIONAL · PASTORAL · PROPHETIC

February 7, 2019

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February 7, 2019



Dear Friends in Christ,

A taskforce of the Leadership Council has been working hard on establishing a modeling tool that will help us the Presbytery to make better financial choices. Part of the impetus for this work has been questions from the floor of Presbytery about our financial sustainability and viability over the coming years. In response, several folks have given hours of time in creating this tool. There are two “Financial Summits” scheduled in the next month for the Chairs of our committees and teams to learn about the tool and how it might be used as well as an Open Space planned for the next Presbytery meeting. I’m grateful for those who have given of their talents to bring this tool to fruition.

We know, however, that sustainability and viability of the Presbytery involves more than finances. Mercy Oduyoye states: “In Africa, we believe in people wealth. In the West you believe in paper wealth”. Even as we attempt to develop a tool that helps us understand our financial outlook, the Nominating Committee brainstorms names of individuals who might serve on the various Committees and Commissions of the Presbytery. They are cognizant of the incredible talents that our members are willing to share, but also the number of vacancies that exist in several areas. Evaluating our finances is important, but so too is taking stock of our “people wealth”.

Both people and paper wealth beg the deeper question of purpose. We have an incredible abundance... but to what end? Is our goal the longevity of the Presbytery.... or does the sustainability of the Presbytery serve the greater purpose of serving our congregations?

Our Mission Statement makes it clear: “Sent by the Triune God to be agents of salvation, reconciliation and justice, we empower and challenge our congregations to be Missional, Pastoral and Prophetic.” All of the tools, all of the evaluations, all of what we have is to this end – to empower and challenge our congregations to be Missional, Pastoral and Prophetic.

Rev. Karen Chamis
Director of Congregational Development and Mission
Acting Head of Staff

Quill of the Stated Clerk

The National Capital Presbytery met on January 22, 2019 at National Presbyterian Church. During the meeting, National Capital Presbytery, led by Moderator Rev. Dr. Quinn Fox and Vice-Moderator Miriam Dewhurst:

- Gathered around the theme “Spiritual Formation.”
- Listened to anthems sung by the National Presbyterian School Children’s Chorus
- Approved Arlington Presbyterian Church’s relocation to the site of their original property on Columbia Pike.
- Granted an exception to the six-year term limit for deacons to Faith Presbyterian Church.
- Approved six proposed Amendments to the Book of Order.
- Approved creation of an Administrative Commission for Riverdale Presbyterian Church, with members to be appointed by the Moderator.
- Watched a Mission Video on Resourcing Congregations—via NCP’s Church Development and Transformation teams, the Mission Coordinating Committee, and the Spiritual Formation Team
- Worshipped with John 15:1-11 presented by Rev. Casey FitzGerald and a sermon, The Graph and the Graft, from Rev. Becca Messman.
- Engaged in table discussion around three storytelling prompts that are found NEXT Church’s work, Cultivated Ministry: Bearing Fruit through Theology, Accountability, Learning, and Storytelling.
- Appreciated the music supplied by Billy Kluttz, evening worship leader, Immanuel PC.

Peace and blessings, Sara

Sara M. Coe
Stated Clerk
National Capital Presbytery
scoe@thepresbytery.org
240-514-5352

Quill of the Stated Clerk

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The Graph and the Graft
By Rebecca Messman
National Capital Presbytery
January 22, 2019



[Beautiful story telling by Casey Wait Fitzgerald]

15 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vineyard keeper. ² He removes any of my branches that don’t produce fruit, and he trims any branch that produces fruit so that it will produce even more fruit. ³ You are already trimmed because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you. A branch can’t produce fruit by itself, but must remain in the vine. Likewise, you can’t produce fruit unless you remain in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, then you will produce much fruit. Without me, you can’t do anything. ⁶ If you don’t remain in me, you will be like a branch that is thrown out and dries up. Those branches are gathered up, thrown into a fire, and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified when you produce much fruit and, in this way, prove that you are my disciples. ⁹ “As the Father loved me, I too have loved you. Remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I kept my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have said these things to you so that my joy will be in you and your joy will be complete.

Startle us again O God....with the ferocious hold of the true vine, with the vibrant nimbleness of branches that are far from dormant or linear... Startle us with joy.

And Lord uphold me, that I might uplift thee. Amen.

The Gospel of John reads like a poem. One I imagine the late Mary Oliver would love. An image from nature emerges, crisp and familiar. I see the vineyard, the vineyard keeper, tromping in God’s muddy boots, snapping off brown branches and trimming curly green vines, eyeing a plump grape, beaded with rain water. Then in a flash of truth, which is the way poets work, the vineyard is life itself. We are green vines. What is trying to flow is love. What is trying to grow is joy. What are we to do... oh people of God? John says we **remain**. Some translations prefer **abide**. We **stay**.

It tempting to respond, “Is that all? Hang in there?” I confess I often prefer the practical to poetic. Sometimes I prefer Mark’s gospel that moves breathlessly from one Jesus exchange to the next. Sometimes I relish Matthew, all the heft of Hebrew scholarship crashing into the Jesus moment. Sometimes I want to pound the pulpit with Luke, bringing that social justice heat into

view. But John, poetically, quietly says **remain**. Remain connected. Stay grafted into the true vine. Abide.

It strikes me sometimes that remaining, abiding together, is the most important call there is. And the hardest.

The other day I was at a clergy lunch. Well, it turned out it was *bring your own lunch*, which not everyone read in the email, a cost saving plan that would have been forgivable had not the coffee pot also malfunctioned, pouring coffee all over the table. We were not starting off on the right foot.

Regular pastor talk ensued. “What do you worship?” “We worship about 200, but our ASAs are up 300%. The bounce house ministry has helped.” Folks turn their heads to the large bounce house in the Fellowship Hall, kids rising and falling on a random Thursday. People said, “hmm,” which is the sound of being both refined and wildly impressed. I said, “Excuse me – ASAs? I am not familiar.” Four people chanted together **Average Sunday Attendance**. “We have metrics for everything. I could tell you how many givers you need per parking space to remain in ministry.” Another pastor said sheepishly, “We were just told that we are not viable. Our building to clergy ratio is not good. The consultant’s graph gives us 2 years, tops.” Folks sigh.

A Rabbi blurted out, “Does anyone else find this deeply disturbing? I want my people to be talking about God, not parking space graphs.” An African American Baptist woman’s eye welled up with tears. “Yes, by all those numbers, we have no future. We make no sense. We are a little church that’s taken big risks to be a welcoming space for gay and trans people. Maybe the only one for miles. And you know what... We actually believe that Jesus wants this congregation to remain.”

I left that *not-lunch* meeting, my stomach grumbling. My heart was grumbling too. Which one tells us who we are? Is it the graph or the graft, that stubborn vine of Jesus Christ?

The graph says congregations are losing members, says the cultural winds are in our face, says churches are splintered and hurting and our country is fraying at its seams.

The graft, that ancient vine, says, “love one another. Bear fruit.”

The graph says there is not enough. Not enough young families. Not enough pledging units. Not enough hours in the day to turn this ship around.

The graft says, “my grace is **sufficient**.” It says, “I am about to do **a new thing**. It springs up. Do you not see it?”

The graph says, “Your worth and viability are found in columns 1 and 2 of the annual statistical report.” The graph haunts pastors, “If it’s all about numbers, go ahead and calculate what you earn per hour, all those holidays. You’d make a lot more money working at Target.”

But the graft holds on ever tighter. We hear our voices say, “Where would we go, Lord? You alone have the words of life.” The graft sets our feet on a rock, puts a new song in our mouth. We even trip over a shoot of new growth that we had no idea was even there. It was not one of our Session’s 3 year goals, but there it is, beaded with the waters of baptism.

Now, don’t get me wrong. I love graphs. I am the daughter of two Presbyterian accountants. That means I am predestined to value numbers. But, I have become convinced that when we worship a *few* of our numbers, when we give them authority to dictate our identity and viability, we have made them into an idol. That is true of bank accounts and scales. It is true of

church budgets and attendance. The graph may tell us about our past. But only the graft, the place where we connect with the grace of Jesus Christ, lays claim to our present and our future.

About a decade ago, I noticed an odd thing going on with our graph at Trinity. Our weekly worship attendance was falling from about 300 to 224. But our building said something different. About 180 people were worshipping in Spanish on Wednesdays as part of Lunch for the Soul, an outreach ministry with Spanish speaking day laborers. Our graph did not know this, because they would never join or pledge. A year later, a new Ghanaian congregation started worshipping in Twi Sundays at noon, the congas usually calling people to worship downstairs at the precise moment when I said, "Let us continue our prayers in silence." The floor rumbled with praise but the graph was un-phased. You see, they affiliate with a different denomination. Urdu speaking Presbyterians hustled in at 1 pm, the harmonium bending around old hymns, 20 voices singing and clapping, but the graph could not catch them because they were considered a Fellowship. When 600 people gathered to pray and weep together because one of our beloved youth passed away in a horrible car wreck, the graph... it callously ticked down by one.

The graph has no patience whatsoever for millennials who visit for years, who attend the Saturday food distribution more often than Sunday School, who give money to the mission trip not the operating fund. I started feeling bad for the graph. The graph kept falling exhausted as lines blurred between the congregation and community. It was bewildered by new patterns of commitment and connection.

And, it's not just our graphs that are sweating. You see, Since the 70s, companies and non-profits have changed their measurements too. Most have abandoned the idea of a single bottom line. Most talk about their impact as an organization, rather than just a set of inputs and outputs. Did you know that Netflix doesn't use Nielson ratings? They prefer to assess how their company is doing by how their content affects the culture. Caring most about how their content affects the culture. Sounds familiar.

I'm preaching today because I was part of a team of ornery Presbyterians who wrote a book called *Cultivated Ministry*. It was written by artists and church planters and professors and pastors and business leaders, folks who know there is a better way to talk about effectiveness than "Do better than last year." Or, "Do better than those people over there." Here's a snapshot. Cultivated Ministry suggests four movements are needed when talking about congregational effectiveness. First, theology, theology asks "Why are we doing this program? How does this usher in the Kingdom of God? How does this bring about the commonwealth of God's love?" Second, learning, and here's where all the graphs and traditional metrics are useful. We ask "What did we learn through all of this?" Third, mutual Accountability. We need clarity about who is on our teams and what we're trying to achieve. "What impact are we trying to have and how will we know if that has happened?" Finally, storytelling, we need to tell the stories of lives changed.

Even an amazing graph can't do all of that, but the graft can. The true vine curls around new people well. It can go up and deep down. It can go out and in. This vine operates on the funny math of God where mustard seeds multiply into subversive and hospitable trees, and a few loaves multiply into food for thousands. This vine actually thrives with pruning... Because when something dies, new life comes.

I suspect most of us feel like we are inhabiting the agricultural meantime, this middle place between staring at this old vine and seeing the harvest. We want to trust in God to bring this good work to fruition. We want to trust light and the waters to do their thing, but we also want to, ahem, help God along. So, we do our other fourfold movement: **anxiety**, let's imagine

all the ways that this could go wrong? **Perfectionism**, we must have everything in order so that there can be no doubt that we did our part correctly. **Moral outrage**, we don a protective layer because we believe conditions in our world may have grown too harsh for vulnerable love, even if that makes our fruit taste bitter. And finally, **dread**, this fear that we will wither alone on this vine.¹

Ultimately, my friends, cultivated ministry is about courage. Courage to remain in this together. Courage to be honest to God church. Courage to face our life, our death, our mysterious God, and our unknown future, without letting anxiety and perfectionism and rage and dread poison us to a hungry world. If living is what we are about, we must be brave and hang on to God and each other every day. *Anxiety* would have us check the graph every day to see if the roots are growing. *Anxiety* would prefer a small indoor pot where we can avoid the snow of doubt and the heat of pain. But clinging to the true vine means we will dwell outside. But we will grow hearty with courage.

According to John, fruit of abiding like this, the fruit of courage is complete joy, and I believe that. Joy as a small church that springs up in a space where mega-plants would not fit. Joy as a large church who knows last year for better or worse doesn't not define them. Joy for a pastor nourished by friendship. Joy at the sound of congas twirling with the sound of an organ. Joy at the sight of affordable housing units winding around a sanctuary. Joy as the old walls of prejudice and shame crumble away under the curious heft of the true vine of Jesus Christ and new walls tremble.

Joy has never been linear. It prefers all the details that a graph misses. The teardrop that hangs on the edge her nose as she remembers her beloved. The curl of a baby's ear. The lump in the throat and the odd cross that leads to eternal life. So, let us not miss the joy. As tempting as it is to be anywhere else, let us abide together.

And I think I remember what the chief end of humanity is...

Was it *to populate the graph on an annual basis and improve it forever?*

No I don't think so. I bet there are some educators here who can help me with this one.

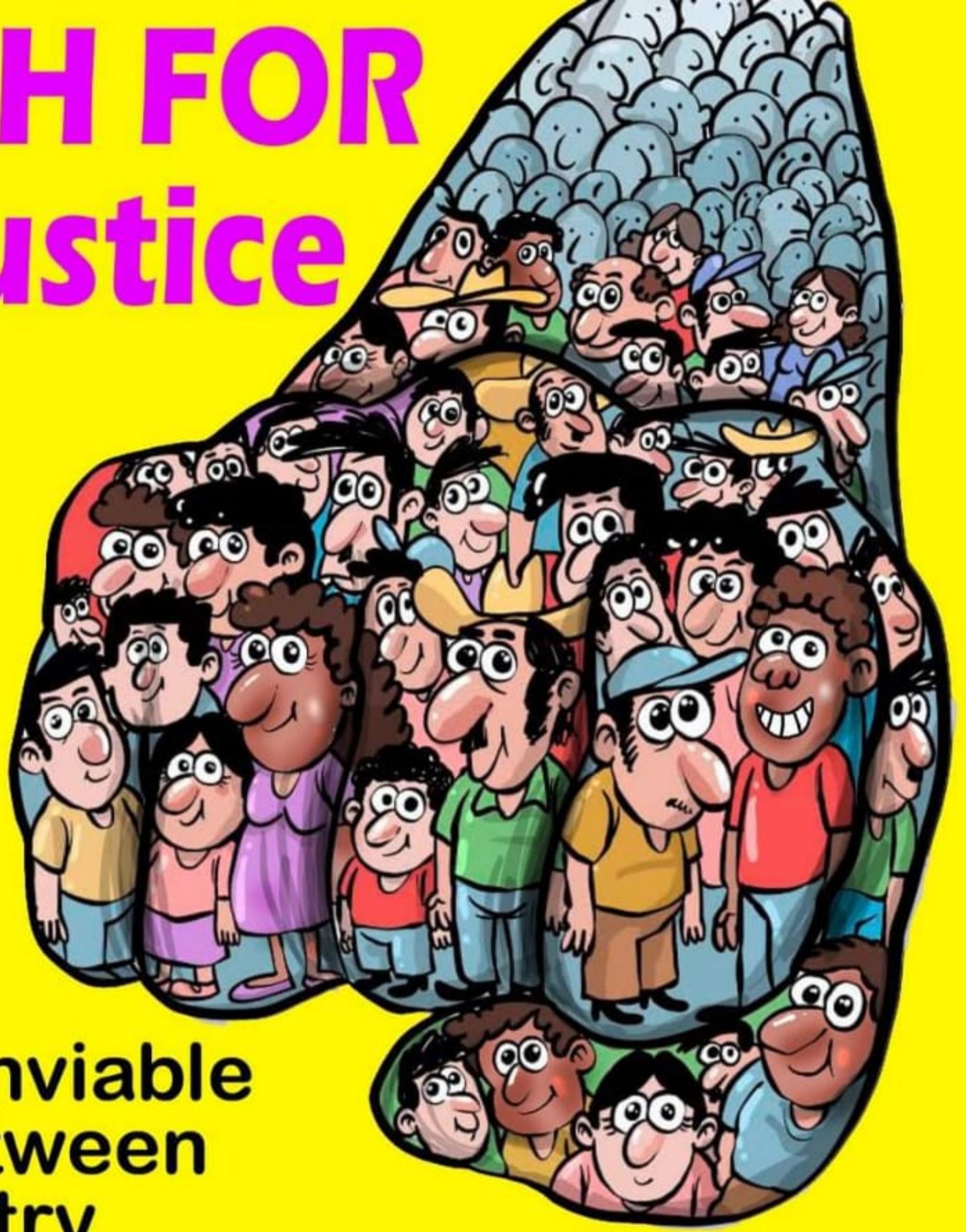
The chief end of humanity is:

To glorify God and ENJOY God forever.

May it be so!

¹ Gratitude for these four lovely words of Barbara Brown Taylor in her sermon *The Automatic Earth*, found in the book *Mixed Blessings*.

MARCH FOR #TPSjustice



300,000 children face the unviable choice between their country & their parents. Everyday TPS families come closer to a final separation.

February 12th, 2019 Point of convergence: The White House

9:00 AM

Nothing about us without us



@tps_alliance



@tps_alliance





The Presbyterian Men and Women of Redeemer
Present



The Norfolk State University Concert Choir

Under the Direction of Dr. Harlan Zackery, Jr. and Mr. Terry Butler

Saturday, February 16, 2019 – 3:00 P.M.

Free Admission with a **Freewill Offering**

(Proceeds will benefit the Redeemer Scholarship Fund for graduating high school seniors)



Church of the Redeemer, Presbyterian (USA)

1423 Girard Street, N.E.

Washington, D.C. 20017

202-832-0095

Further Info: Elder Carl V. Payne, II 301-949-8755 or 301-675-8447

Elder Kevin P. Moore 202-258-4857



REFORMED
INSTITUTE of
METROPOLITAN
WASHINGTON

The *Reformed Institute of Metropolitan Washington* has been created by a group of Presbyterian churches in the Washington, D.C. area to promote understanding and deepen appreciation of the Reformed tradition among the staffs and members of Presbyterian churches.

HOW IS THE INSTITUTE SUPPORTED AND STAFFED? Funding for the Institute comes from gifts from individual donors, fees for services, and grants from the sponsoring Presbyterian churches: Darnestown, First Arlington, Heritage, Immanuel, Lewinsville, National, Old Meeting House, Potomac, Rock, and Westminster (Alexandria).

The Institute is governed by a board of directors composed of the sponsoring churches' representatives. The staff consists of Dr. R. Bruce Douglass, Director, Ms. Mary J. Hill, Program Coordinator, and Ms. Mary K. Miano, Program Associate.

HOW DO I LEARN MORE ABOUT THE INSTITUTE?

Contact the Program Coordinator:

P.O. Box 1928

Alexandria, VA 22313-1928

Tel/Fax: 703-518-5125

info@reformedinstitute.org

www.reformedinstitute.org



/reformedinst



@reformedinst

RELATE & RESIST

A course offered by the Reformed Institute of Metropolitan Washington

Dates: Saturdays: February 16, 23, March 2, and 9, 2019
Time: 9:30 a.m. to Noon
Location: Lewinsville Presbyterian Church
1724 Chain Bridge Road
McLean, VA 22101
www.lewinsville.org
Facilitator: Dr. Melissa Kirkpatrick
Cost: \$75 for members of Reformed Institute sponsoring churches, \$90 for all others

In times of crisis, the church has occasionally sought to speak for justice and the right by once more loudly proclaiming what Christian faith teaches and, in doing so, call for resistance to powers that would subvert those teachings.

The Presbyterian Book of Confessions contains two such documents – the Barmen Declaration and the Belhar Confession. In addition to these, the most recent General Assembly has commended the “Reclaiming Jesus” document, “a confession of faith in time of crisis,” to congregations for their study.

These three documents have commonalities in structure and a common theme of critique of the state and church – a criticism of the state's co-opting some of the cultural power of religion, a strong restatement of what the church claims to believe, and an affirmation of the church's duty to act on those beliefs.



Belhar and Barmen, to various degrees, represented resistance. Reclaiming Jesus calls for it. Barmen reminded the churches to stand firm against accommodation to National Socialism. Belhar proclaimed the unity of the church in the face of the system of apartheid that divided it. The new document, Reclaiming Jesus, urges churches to reclaim the Christian witness, to resist the cultural and political idolatries that would draw us away from doing our part in repairing God's world.

The series of discussions will cover a brief history of each document, including the context in which each was written. Leaders will seek to engage participants in exploring how these documents continue to speak to us and challenge our thinking today.

Readings (available online):

-The Barmen Declaration, found in The Book of Confessions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or online at sites such as: <https://groups.csail.mit.edu/medg/people/doyle/personal/enters/hermann/declaration.html>

-The Belhar Confession, also found in the latest edition of The Book of Confessions or online here: https://kerkargief.co.za/doks/bely/CF_Belhar.pdf

-“Reclaiming Jesus” found here: http://www.reclaimingjesus.org/sites/default/files/downloads/reclaiming_jesus.pdf

Course Facilitators:

Sessions will be facilitated by **Dr. Melissa Kirkpatrick** with instruction from:

-**The Rev. Dr. Larry Golemon**, the Transitional Executive Director of the Reformed Institute and the Executive Director of the Washington Theological Consortium

-**The Rev. Dr. Quinn Fox**, Associate Pastor for Discipleship and Christian Formation at National Presbyterian Church in Washington, DC

-**The Rev. Denise Anderson**, Co-Moderator of the 222nd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Coordinator for the Racial and Intercultural Justice Office at the Presbyterian Mission Agency in Louisville, KY

*The deadline for registration is **February 6~~13~~, 2019***

REGISTRATION

Mail the completed form below with registration payment to:

P.O. Box 1928
Alexandria, VA 22313-1928
Attn: Mary Hill

Please make checks payable to “Reformed Institute.”

Or go to our website: www.reformedinstitute.org to register and pay online.

- ❖ Cost to members of sponsoring churches is \$75.00.
- ❖ Cost to other participants is \$90.00.

Individual churches may wish to subsidize the cost for members. The course is limited to 20 participants, and must have a minimum enrollment of 10. Registration Deadline is **February 6~~13~~, 2019**.

NAME

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YOUR CHURCH

Church of the Pilgrims to Host Public Affairs Series: “What’s Going On?” Washington Post columnist E. J. Dionne First Guest Speaker, February 2019.

In February [Church of the Pilgrims](#) (PC/USA) begins a public affairs series called “What’s Going On?” (WGO). WGO’s inaugural program will be “The First Amendment Crisis Series,” a three-part program focusing on Freedom of the Press, Freedom of Religion, and the Freedom to Assemble in the age of Trump and during creeping authoritarianism worldwide.

Author (“One Nation After Trump”) and Washington Post columnist E. J. Dionne is the series’ first speaker. He will make a timely presentation on the status of journalism under the Trump administration on **Thursday , February 28, 2019, 7:00 pm.**

Since President Donald Trump has called the media “the enemy of the people,” and the public has witnessed the administration’s pulling of a CNN reporter’s White House press credential, as well as the assassination of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, Americans are beginning to wonder about some of their basic freedoms, especially the right to participate in governance by being informed by a free and independent press.

In March the series will host a second presentation, which will address Freedom of Religion. In April the series will follow with the third event, focusing upon Freedom to Assemble.

“Church of the Pilgrims has always been on the forefront of advocating for rights,” observes Rev. Jan Nolting Carter, Transitional Pastor at Pilgrims. “In these days, there are few things more important than talking about and acting on protecting freedom of speech, freedom of religion and freedom of assembly.”

“We thought that Pilgrims, known for its activist history, could play a unique role in regard to keeping the community and those beyond it informed,” added Norman Kelley, the project’s coordinator. “The church wants to encourage democratic conversations about what’s going on. Democracy works best when neighbors and strangers can ask questions and seek answers.”

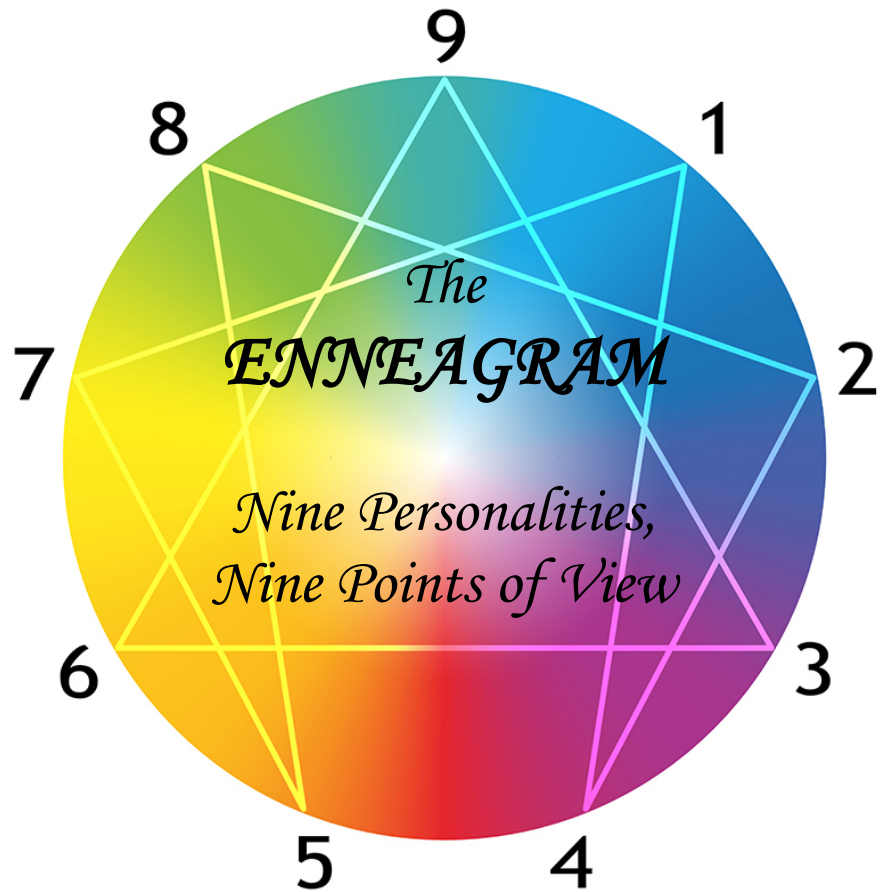
All three events will be held at the **Church of the Pilgrims, 2201 P Street NW in the District**, three blocks away from the Dupont Circle Metro Station. Following the presentation by each featured speaker, there will be a ‘question and answer’ period allowing participants to raise questions or points for discussion,

[Church of the Pilgrims is a Presbyterian Church.](#) The congregation was founded in 1903 as the Second Southern Presbyterian Church and took its current name in 1919.

The Enneagram is a powerful tool for self-discovery. It is based on the theory that each of us is a variation on one of nine core personality types.

In discovering our type, we gain access to the underlying motivation and focus of attention to which each of us is predisposed. By observing our motivation and attention, we can broaden our experience of life.

Over time we have become “blind” to our automatic behaviors and ingrained motivations. The Enneagram helps us to look at our “blindness” in an accepting way and move our individual lives into a more humble and effective balance.



A Workshop for Clergy

February 28th, 2019

10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Saint Mark Presbyterian Church

-lunch provided, \$10 donation suggested -

Registration is required, but the workshop is free.

Please contact: kchamis@thepresbytery.org



About Barbara Jaquette, MSW

Enneagram: Studied and taught the Enneagram for 30 years. Certified to teach by the Helen Palmer / David Daniels school of the Enneagram in the narrative tradition. (Narrative tradition means that it is in telling our story and listening to the stories of others that we come to know the Enneagram.)

Professional: High school teacher – home economics, family life, child development, relationship communications, independent living. Leader of program that was part of a Maryland Drop-out Prevention initiative. Pastoral Counselor with a small interdenominational agency that partnered with churches to become part of their community mission commitment.

Presbyterian: All my life. Baptized at Church of the Pilgrims. Member of Warner Memorial Presbyterian Church for 60 years – deacon, elder, Stephen Ministry leader.



National Capital
PRESBYTERY
MISSIONAL · PASTORAL · PROPHETIC



2019 NEXT CHURCH NATIONAL GATHERING

March 11–13, 2019 || Seattle First Presbyterian Church



Tali Hairston



Jennifer Harvey



Mary Ellen Azada



Kelle Brown



Eliana Maxim

The NEXT Church National Gathering is filled with church leaders (pastors, lay people, seminarians, educators, youth workers, and more) sharing stories of their experiences of ministry, new ideas they are trying, and honest conversations about ministry today. Creative worship centers us around God's presence. And multiple opportunities to engage in workshops and conversation about particular aspects of ministry foster new and deeper connections. We hope you will make plans to join us!

LEARN MORE & REGISTER: WWW.NEXTCHURCH.NET

The Spiritual Formation Team of NCP IS offering scholarships!



Kenya Mission Network Conference

Churches and Presbyteries with mission relationships and projects in Kenya are encouraged to join those who participate in the Kenya Mission Network of the PC(USA) at its upcoming annual conference March 28-30, 2019 at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Alexandria, Virginia.

The theme for this year's conference is ***Education in Kenya: Lighting the Fire*** "The unfolding of your words gives light." Psalms 119:130. We are pleased to have as our guests from Kenya Rev. Lucy Wambui Waweru, Director of Christian Education, and Rev. Robert Waihenya Ngugi, Director of Missions and Social Responsibilities, with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA). The event begins with registration at 4:00 PM on Thursday, March 28, and concludes following a closing worship service at 11:00 AM on Saturday, March 30. Registration fee is \$100 per person, with a discounted rate of \$10 for students and a special rate of \$50 for those who can attend only for the day on Friday.

Visit the Network's website at <https://www.kenyamissionnetwork.org> for more information and details about the upcoming conference, including a link to the [registration form](#).



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HAI+I



Travel to Haiti and
share your skills.

Experience the
beauty and
transformation.

**MAY 25 -
JUNE 1 2019**

This team will help with school-based clinics at a rural CCH partner school and small construction projects at CCH's new facility. Healthcare professionals and non-medical volunteers are needed!

**\$900 TRIP FEE
+ AIRFARE**

Interested? Contact
abby@cchaiti.org

www.cchaiti.org