

THURSDAY MAILING



National Capital
PRESBYTERY
MISSIONAL • PASTORAL • PROPHETIC

June 28, 2018

In this edition

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June 28, 2018



Epistle Lesson

Acts 5:1-11

But a man named Ananias—his wife, Sapphira, conniving in this with him—sold a piece of land, secretly kept part of the price for himself, and then brought the rest to the apostles and made an offering of it. Peter said, “Ananias, how did Satan get you to lie to the Holy Spirit and secretly keep back part of the price of the field? Before you sold it, it was all yours, and after you sold it, the money was yours to do with as you wished. So, what got into you to pull a trick like this? You didn’t lie to men but to God.”

Ananias, when he heard those words, fell down dead. *That* put the fear of God into everyone who heard of it. The younger men went right to work and wrapped him up, then carried him out and buried him.

Not more than three hours later, his wife, knowing nothing of what had happened, came in. Peter said, “Tell me, were you given this price for your field?” “Yes,” she said, “that price.” Peter responded, “What’s going on here that you connived to conspire against the Spirit of the Master? The men who buried your husband are at the door, and you’re next.” No sooner were the words out of his mouth than she also fell down, dead. When the young men returned they found her body. They carried her out and buried her beside her husband. By this time the whole church and, in fact, everyone who heard of these things had a healthy respect for God. They knew God was not to be trifled with.

Words for the Journey

(Third in a series about Paul: the first Presbytery Leader)

When I was in the parish I somehow resisted the temptation to use this passage on Stewardship Sunday. So, what does a preacher do with this? Give everything you have or die. The Session will start paying more attention to the Real Estate section scanning for member sales!

Anybody else think maybe Peter over reacted just a little bit here!

Again, we see the tension played out between the Pauline Christians and the Petrine Christians. Peter is overseeing this transaction. Peter’s authority as an Apostle is certain. He has established his power to heal a couple of chapters previous, now he shows his inclination to pronounce death as well. Ananias and Sapphira are Greek/ Gentile converts. Their names give that much away. Here is a story of the extremes of Church discipline written by Luke, one of Paul’s biggest fans.

Any reader would see that Peter is too rigid. Absent is the flexibility of Paul to accommodate the faith to appropriate measures. By the time Luke wrote Acts the practice of wholesale communal ownership of property was long past. The Gentile and the Jewish Christian alike would see Peter’s reaction to be extreme. So, this story lends more cred to Paul, less cred to Peter.

The Jewish Jerusalem church did ask folks to sell everything and give it to the church, to quit their jobs and wait for the end. Paul however encourages everyone to keep their jobs, live moral and upright lives, tend to the needs of the poor, tend to prayer, demonstrate the fruit of the spirit. Paul was intent on removing ritual obstacles to the faith. This story would, no doubt, have alerted any Greek speaking congregation to resist the messages of those hard core, follow-the-law, Petrites who come around in pairs every-so-often talking about circumcision, kosher food and sabbath. This is the sort of story to inoculate those believers from being led astray. These are the guys that killed Ananias and Sapphira for holding on to some property.

We talk some about over-regulated and under-regulated systems; about loose-tight polarities; about cultural accommodation sorting out the essentials from the adiaphora. We bring stories of how this co-pastor transition model from one pastor to the next did or didn't work. About how we maintain the principle of open search with a non-European background congregation that is familiar with a very different model for succession. We also frame our stories to make a point, to persuade others to join the new, improved trajectory of that story into a desired future. That's just what Luke is doing in this story. Our future is not with those Petrines who will kill you for keeping stuff back, but with these Paulines who do not burden the faithful with these rules and laws, but who live into a new spirit, a moral community, with a different story than the one the Petrines will be telling.

According to Luke, who wrote Acts, Paul has that different story. Change is about simultaneously pointing to the desirable future while exposing the familiar patterns of the past as undesirable. The Petrines hope to stay tethered to a Jewish past which the Paulines see the need to depart. This story is Luke's way to subtly disparage the authority of James and Peter. And the Gentile Christians best remember it when the Petrines show up in town.

We best remember it also when Robert Jeffress excuses rancid immorality, when Paula White spews her prosperity anti-gospel, when Pat Robertson recounts a dream where Trump sat at the right hand of God (excuse me, doesn't Christ sit there??), when Franklin Graham announces that Progressives aren't Christian. The abuse of spiritual authority is all around us. We need to inoculate our believers accordingly.

Presbyteries also need to give care to whom we entrust the pulpits of our congregations. We need to give care to the spiritual formation of inquirers, candidates and pastors. We have a doctrinal range defined by our Confessions. We have an ethos of excellence in education. We understand call that involves the individual called, the congregation and the Presbytery. Someone who can pronounce JEH-E-SU-SUS-A will need to bring a well-developed mind along with that passionate spirit. We are a community which enforces doctrinal boundaries and moral boundaries; that engages in communal spiritual practices, and are continuously engaged in a shared language about our experience of the Holy One with each other and with the saints who have proceeded us.

We see the patterns for this oversight in the work of Paul, the first Presbytery leader.

G. Wilson Gunn
General Presbyter

Quill of the Stated Clerk

The National Capital Presbytery met on June 26, 2018 at National Presbyterian Church. During the meeting, National Capital Presbytery, led by Moderator Bill Plitt:

- Elected committee and commission members and chairs for the year beginning in September 2018.
- Approved distribution of scholarship funds to three seminary students.
- Welcomed and heard from the Rev. David Emery (Ashburn), the Rev. Joyce Emery (National), and Rev. Marcus Leathers (United Christian Parish).
- Remembered the late Rev. Margaret (Peg) True in prayer.
- Enjoyed a slide show of Moderator Plitt's many, many visits to churches in NCP.
- Approved the addition to the Office Fund of the proceeds that will ultimately result from the sale of the Wilson Lane manse.
- Heard, in a panel discussion, about the experiences of NCP's commissioners and delegates at the Saint Louis General Assembly.
- Attended breakouts to learn more specifically about our commissioners' and delegates' work in their GA committees.
- Worshipped together, hearing a sermon, "Think of Others," from Moderator Bill Plitt and music from the Community Choir and celebrating the Lord's Supper.
- Participated in the installation of our new moderator, the Rev. Dr. E. Quinn Fox (National), and new vice-moderator, Ruling Elder Miriam Dewhurst (New York Avenue).

Peace and blessings, Sara

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

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Clerks' Tip of the Month

What Happened at the General Assembly?

Although the 223rd General Assembly of the PCUSA did not have the drama (and divisiveness) of some past assemblies, a lot got done. And our commissioners and delegates served us well. If you want to learn about all the action, check out this page on the General Assembly website: <https://ga-pcusa.org/general-assembly-news/>.

But what happened to the things National Capital Presbytery sent to the GA? Most of what we sent or concurred in were adopted.

NCP sent a request for an Authoritative Interpretation concerning whether a session has authority to set policy regarding weddings on church property. A Permanent Judicial Commission decision in one presbytery held that a session could not set such a policy but had to consider each case separately but only after a decision by the pastor whether to conduct the wedding. The General Assembly, as we had urged, determined that sessions do have authority to set policy regarding weddings on church property.

NCP had concurred with an overture directing the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation to divest from fossil fuel and actively invest in securities that focus on renewable energy. The GA did not adopt that overture, but instead adopted the report of the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee and directed MRTI, among other things, to continue its engagement with fossil fuel companies to work toward such things as reduced greenhouse gas emissions and improved energy efficiency, with possible selective divestment recommendations to the 224th General Assembly for companies that are not moving toward compliance.

NCP concurred with an overture on responding to the current Syrian crisis by urging government and United Nations officials to bring about a ceasefire, work for reconciliation of the Syrian society, help alleviate the suffering of Syrians, and deepen our partnership with Syrian Christians. This overture passed in the omnibus.

NCP concurred with an overture to recognize the prophetic witness of the Reverend Henry Highland Garnet, pastor of 15th Street Presbyterian Church in Washington, DC and Shiloh Presbyterian Church in New York City, by, among other things, publishing his speech in 1865 to Congress at the request of President Lincoln ("A Memorial Discourse"), and splitting the proceeds between those two churches. In committee the overture was amended to add two other churches connected with Rev. Garnet and to request the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation to include "A Memorial Discourse" in any materials developed in the future for the



study of The Confession of Belhar. The General Assembly overwhelmingly approved this overture.

The 224th General Assembly will be in Baltimore, Maryland beginning June 20, 2020! That will be a great opportunity for National Capital Presbytery folks to observe and participate in this impressive event. And, I suspect, we will have an opportunity to help our kin in Baltimore Presbytery as they host.

If you have a tip you think others could use or a topic you would like information on, please let me know at scoe@thepresbytery.org.

Sara Coe, Stated Clerk (National Capital Presbytery), 240-514-5352



EST 2018

ART MINISTRY NETWORK

NATIONAL CAPITAL PRESBYTERY

**We're
getting
organized.**

Visual Art. Music. Woodworking. Dance. Theatre.

You name it. Let's collaborate.

JOIN US. July 14 @ 1 PM

Bush Hill Presbyterian Church

4916 Franconia Road, Alexandria, VA 22310



Harvey Houston Hope

Volunteer Rebuild Trip with Fuller Center Disaster ReBuilders



Trip Details

Who: Adults and Youth (16 years and older).

What: Volunteer work trip to help rebuild after Hurricane Harvey

When: Sunday, July 22, 2018 – Saturday, August 4, 2018

(1 week, 2 weeks, or any combination over that time frame)

Where: Houston, TX

Cost: \$100/week (includes room/board and meals!)

Transportation: Own expense - however, carpools may be arranged.

How do I sign up?

It's easy! Register online at:
<https://fullercenter.org/disaster-rebuilders/>

Each individual must fill out the online registration form and enter NCP under:
"Group or Team Name."

Please email Tom Hull at constructivellc@gmail.com once you have registered
with your dates of arrival and departure.



SMALL Capital Campaign

Join Online



Date: **Sept. 11, 2018**
Time: **1:00 – 1:50pm**
Venue: **Webinar**
Cost: **No charge**

Register [HERE](#)

T h e B a s i c s

When suddenly we have a surprise or an opportunity well above the capacity of the budget... maybe it's not enough to call for a massive capital campaign. So what do we do?

The Stewardship Committee of the National Capital Presbytery brings you a webinar on *small capital campaigns in the local church*. We'll answer these questions and more:

- What is a small campaign?
- What size should we do on our own?
- When should we hire someone? How?
- Are there steps we follow? A checklist of practices?
- Who do we talk to?

Presenter: John Wray. John is a seasoned professional in church capital campaigns. He is currently consulting with the Presbyterian Foundation on how churches can conduct a small or mini- capital campaign.

NCP'S Stewardship Committee is offering scholarships to this event! Email lquander@thepresbytery if interested!

TRANSFORMING THE FACE OF generosity

ROMANS 12:2



September 24 - 26, 2018

St. Louis, MO

Hilton St. Louis Frontenac



Keynoter

Diana Butler Bass
Author of "Grateful, The
Transformative Power
of Giving Thanks" due
out April 2018.



Keynoter

Chick Lane
Author of "Ask, Thank,
Tell: Improving
Stewardship Ministry in
Your Congregation"



Worship Leader

Larissa Kwong Abazia
Vice Moderator
of the 221st
General Assembly of
the PC(USA)

Plus over 30 workshops covering topics such as annual stewardship, planned giving, theology of giving, current trends in stewardship, capital campaigns, and generosity

To register and for more information visit:
www.stewardshipkaleidoscope.org

TRANSFORMING THE FACE OF generosity

ROMANS 12:2

Who should attend?:

Pastors, lay leaders, judicatory staff, and anyone who is looking to learn more about stewardship in today's church context.

Conference Fee and Location:

\$275 on or before August 1, 2018

\$300 after August 1, 2018

Hilton St. Louis Frontenac in St. Louis, MO

Conference Room rate of \$112/night

Conference includes:

Four plenary sessions

Four workshops (30+ to choose from)

Two worship services

Dinner Monday

Breakfast and lunch Tuesday & Wednesday

Conference schedule:

Monday, September 24

Registration (12-2 p.m.)

Conference begins (2 p.m.)

Plenary 1, Workshop Session 1

Dinner, Worship

Tuesday, September 25

Breakfast

Plenary 2, Workshop Session 2

Lunch

Workshop Session 3, Plenary 3,

Free Evening

Wednesday, September 26

Breakfast

Workshop Session 4, Plenary 4, Closing Worship

Conference ends with Boxed Lunch to go

Workshops:

(This list is just a sampling of the 30+ workshops that will be offered.)

Fundraising as Spiritual Formation and Pastoral Care

J.C. Austin, Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Bethlehem, PA

Creating a Culture of Generosity

Robert Hay, Jr., Ministry Relations Officer for the Presbyterian Foundation

Vulnerability and Courage: The Practice of Stewardship

Roy Howard, Pastor for Saint Mark Presbyterian Church in Bethesda, MD

Planned Giving: 25 Ideas to Get You to the Next Level

Karl Mattison, Director of Planned Giving Resources for the Presbyterian Foundation

Understanding Stewardship in Racial and Ethnic Communities

Jim Reese, Minister for Specialized Interpretation with the Presbyterian Foundation

Electronic Giving: Using Digital Tools to Grow Ministry

Richard Rogers, Vice President at Horizons Stewardship, and author of The eGiving Guide For Every Church (Abingdon Press, 2016)

Understanding Stewardship and Family Systems

Steve Oelschlaeger, Stewardship Project Coordinator, ELCA Stewardship Staff, Domestic Missions Unit

Funding Innovative and New Ministries

Mieke Vandersall, Founding Pastor of Not So Churchy and Principal Consultant at the Vandersall Collective

To register and for more information visit:
www.stewardshipkaleidoscope.org

FUNDING AVAILABLE SPEER FUND

Is your church engaged actively in supporting ministry that helps the poor and oppressed to gain power and to take responsibility over their lives, or ministry which addresses root causes of poverty? Be aware of this funding opportunity!

Ministry examples:

- Community development
- Training / job placement associated with transitional housing
- Cooperative enterprises: worker-owned business
- Voter registration and voter education
- Self-help: tutorial, life skills training, job training
- Advocacy: efforts congruent with aims of the Bequest (see Funding source and purpose)

A typical grant would be \$3,000 to \$5,000 and proposals should put forward clearly defined and measurable goals.

DEADLINE for application(s)

Applications must reach us *no later than 30 September 2018*. We announce grant awards in *January, 2019*.

Application and Funding Guidelines

<http://www.synatlantic.org/funding/speer-fund/>

Rev. Beth Braxton

NCP Representative on Speer-Fund Committee



Racial Awareness and Mindfulness 2018

A Mini-Festival of the Arts, Awareness, Healing, and Justice

October 20, 2018, 10:00AM-5:00PM | Check-in begins onsite at 9am

MUSIC, DRUMMING, KEYNOTE, WORKSHOPS, EMOTIONAL EMANCIPATION CIRCLES, INTERPLAY, INTERGENERATIONAL, CAUCUSES, MULTIRACIAL, CHILDREN'S TRACK, FREE LUNCH, A LEARNING COMMUNITY



Keynote: Author/Scholar
Dr. Ibram X. Kendi
"How to Be An Anti-Racist"

For more information on Dr. Kendi, please visit www.prhspeakers.com

Westminster Presbyterian Church
400 I Street SW, Washington DC 20024

Register online: <https://2018-racial-awareness-festival.eventbrite.com>

Potter's House Books will be present.



SAVE THE DATE

2019 CALM TO THE WAVES RETREAT

When: January 28-January 30

Where: Dunes Manor Hotel, Ocean City, Maryland

For: For NCP Parish Clergy, Educators, and Parish Associates and Their Spouses

Theme: *Psalms of Lament in the Season of Lent*

Keynote and Worship Leaders:

Dr. Denise Dombkowski Hopkins, Professor of Biblical Theology, Wesley Theological Seminary

Rev. Dr. Eric Myers, PCUSA minister, Frederick PC

Billy Kluttz, Evening Worship Leader, Immanuel PC

Hosted by NCP CARE TEAM

Registration begins September 25

Prayer Partner Proposal

The Disaster Assistance Network of the National Capital Presbytery has begun to develop relationships with a few congregations in Puerto Rico. So far, through generous donations from NCP congregations, the network has been able to help fund assistance projects that are being defined and led by congregations in Puerto Rico. More information about that work can be found at <http://www.nationalcapitalmission.org/disaster-assistance>

One of the founding goals of this network was to not simply provide funds, but to also build lasting and long-term relationships. This specific goal came from the recognition that the rebuilding process will be long, and that often energy for rebuilding dissipates quickly.

With that in mind, we are seeking to create prayer partnerships between National Capital Presbytery congregations and congregations in Puerto Rico. These prayer partnerships would act in parallel to the work being done by the presbytery's disaster assistance network and would not require dedicated funding on the part of the participating church.

What does a prayer partnership look like?

If interested, your congregation would identify at least one member to act as a liaison and then be matched with a congregation in Puerto Rico. The network would facilitate the initial connection and from there it is up to the two congregations on how best to move forward. Since the goal is to get the two congregations praying for each other, exchanges could happen monthly over a telephone call, weekly through emails or letters, or could be facilitated through some sort of online platform like WhatsApp.

Does our congregation need to speak Spanish?

It will certainly be easier if a few Spanish speakers can be identified within the congregation who can act as either a liaison or as translators. Many of the Puerto Rican congregations have English speakers who can act as liaisons. And although not perfect, Google Translate does a good job of translating emails and/or letters and has so far been useful in the work occurring at the presbytery level.

What does this look like in the long run?

The goal is relationship building, so we hope that this prayer partnership will be transformed by the Holy Spirit into something more substantial. The best mission projects being done by churches today are ones that are forged in mutual relationships. We hope that your congregation will grow spiritually from this partnership as well.

Will you join into a Prayer Partnership?

Please do consider this opportunity. If you or anyone in your congregation has questions, Karen Chamis, would be happy to answer those questions, or visit the congregation. Email Karen, KChamis@thepresbytery.org.



Rev. Henry Highland Garnet gave the most important speech in African-American history on Feb. 12, 1865

From John William Templeton
Ruling Elder, St. John's, San Francisco
Trustee, Stillman College, Tuscaloosa
Overture Advocate, Presbytery of San Francisco

On Recognizing the Reverend Henry Highland Garnet's Prophetic Voice for Today—From the Presbytery of San Francisco.

We learned several new developments during the aftermath of the 49-0 vote by the Social Justice Committee which commissioners should be aware of. The overture advocates will work with David Dobson of the Presbyterian Publishing Corp. and the sessions of Grace Memorial, 15th Street and St. James to create the resources for a publishing plan which will make Garnet as popular among Presbyterians as Hamilton is on

Broadway. Because the 224th General Assembly will be in Baltimore, we will also work with the Presbyteries of Baltimore and New Castle on developing tours to his birthsite as well as those of Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman. If you'd like to be part of those efforts, please contact me at 415-240-3537 or by email at john@zenviba.org

See this re-enactment at Ingleside Presbyterian
<https://vimeo.com/216098325>

Here are examples from Grace Memorial and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary which illustrate how his legacy continues to be salient.

<https://www.pts.edu/blog/henry-highland-garnet-bivocational-church-planter/>

<http://old.post-gazette.com/regionstate/20020218garnet0218p4.asp>

To God Be the Glory



Kasey's Note



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

The polarizing rhetoric and the dehumanizing actions of elected and appointed officials in Washington is causing people of conscience to grieve for the victims and the soul of our nation. Yesterday the Supreme Court provided official license to discriminate on the basis of religion and nationality. People in America feel targeted and vulnerable. People around our world are bewildered and frightened as our nation of immigrants closes its doors.

Let us remember our faith communities speak with a different voice and message. We honor a higher authority, who has created us as one human family, and called us to love one another as we love ourselves. Our mission is creating the beloved community where every basic human need is met and every human right respected. We believe the power of love is greater than all forms of loveless power including prejudice and hate.

The recent season of Ramadan, experienced by millions of Muslims in our country, and graciously shared with a growing number of us in Montgomery County, illustrates my point. In the face of false accusations and threats, they devoted themselves to spiritual disciplines including fasting, offering forgiveness and engaging in charitable deeds. The results included inner peace and being ambassadors of mercy and justice for all. May it offer insight and inspiration for us all.

It is the hallmark of all the great religions and something we will continue to experience in the days ahead. Yesterday, the Director of The Presbyterian Church USA, Office of Public Witness, Rev. Jimmie Hawkins, said: "We are a nation of immigrants and a nation which claims values that call us to welcome the immigrant, refugee and alien fleeing persecution and praying for a better life. Scripture demands that we open the doors of our hearts and our homeland to provide a safe haven for those who seek it. Yesterday's ruling is discouraging but we must continue to say no to hateful and harmful policies which discriminate against families and especially children."

I have been receiving other messages such as, "Oh my God, what can I do?" Here are simple suggestions:

- Delve below the surface and behind the lies being perpetrated against those of different colored skin, ethnicity and race. Learn about the Muslim faith and the facts behind the refugees. Yesterday our President said no other country would have these people. Germany, for example, is half the size of Texas and is assimilating over a million largely unvetted refugees. To date the Trump administration has allowed only 12,000 refugees to enter after an 18 step vetting process averaging 18 months. The Latino community complete with the gangs have a crime rate below our national average. Become educated.
- Reach out to your Latino and Muslim neighbors, office colleagues and parents of your children's friends. Claim them as your sister and brother. Let them know you care. If you are a faith leader and do not have a relationship with a mosque, I encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity for enriching your life and that of your faith community. You may also find Recognizing American Muslim Roots helpful.
- Contribute funds locally and nationally that support these troubled communities. Let your faith community know you will support them as they increase engagement with and support for the Latino and Muslim communities. You may be surprised by what some faith communities are doing such as the United Methodist Church, which is considering charging one of their members, Attorney General Jeff Sessions, with child abuse based on "chargeable offenses" outlined in church law that includes racial discrimination and disseminating unsound doctrines. You may also read what rabbis and pastors are calling for in "From pulpits across America...".
- Prepare yourself to be an up-stander rather than a by-stander. In observing bullying and harassment be ready to peacefully intervene. Techniques are on the internet and it may help to practice with friends. Following the inauguration hate incidents went up over 200 percent in Montgomery County. That is down today but the majority of incidents are in our public schools. We are working on it and know our homes are the best deterrent.
- Coming out of our primary election means we should have more time and energy for political advocacy. A healthy democracy requires our participation and there will be plenty of bills to support and deny. Thus, after becoming educated, we should become stronger in building a more honorable nation. It may include joining Families Belong Together Protest in front of the White House this Saturday between 11am to 2 pm.

In response to the threatened Muslim ban and our Governor saying no to Syrian refugees over two years ago, we responded with Welcome Our New Neighbors. Today some 60 faith communities in Montgomery County are caring for refugee families. It has blessed us with a greater sense of family and deeper appreciation for of our diverse Montgomery County.

If you are interested in creating a more inclusive and resilient Montgomery County, you will find opportunities on our website www.montgomerycountyinterfaithmd.org and in the INMC status report below.

Om Shanti, Sat Sri Akal, Paz, Salaam, Shalom, Namaste, Peace,



Rev. Mansfield "Kasey" Kaseman
Interfaith Community Liaison
Office of Community Partnerships
www.montgomerycountyinterfaithmd.org

