

Presbytery of Boston
E-Connection
August 20, 2009

The following is an excerpt from the weekly PCUSA Washington Office update, which provides some background from General Assembly on current health care issues.

What's Happening with Health Care?

Congress has made significant progress on health reform in the last two weeks. On the House side, all three committees have approved a bill (which varies slightly from each other) and the compromise awaits consideration by the full House when they return after the August recess. On the Senate side, one of two committees has approved a bill, and the other is expected to release their version of the health insurance overhaul in early September. Though neither chamber has taken a full vote yet, the process is underway.

The proposals look somewhat promising -- both the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP) proposal (the one that has been approved by its committee) and the joint (tri-committee) House proposal would make the health insurance market more accountable to patients by significantly reforming the private insurance market and including a public health insurance option. Though none of the proposals on the table include a single-payer system like the one for which the 218th General Assembly (2008) expressed support, the expansion in coverage that these bills would bring would reach tens of millions of people who do not currently have access to health coverage, and therefore, care. Congress is not taking the approach the PC(USA) has called for, but is moving in the right direction.

Health care reform is very close to becoming a reality, but the remaining hurdle is the question of money. Congress needs to agree on how to finance this reform effort. Your members of Congress need to hear your voice this August recess. As you can imagine, opponents of change are well organized and financed. We have heard that calls to members' offices run 3 to 1 against health care reform. If people want improvements in the health care system, controls over private insurance, and a major step toward a single payer plan, members need to hear about it - now.

Your Senators will be in your state August 8-31, while and your Representative is probably already home, the House having adjourned last week. Call your Members' district offices right away to schedule a meeting. Your members of Congress may also be holding local town hall meetings on health care (information should be posted on their websites). Let your members of Congress know that you want everyone in the United States to have access to equal, accessible, affordable, high-quality health care.

* Throughout August, the WWW will provide updates on the content of the various health proposals in light of General Assembly policy on access to health care.

General Assembly Guidance:

In 2002, the General Assembly approved "Advocacy on Behalf of the Uninsured," in which it:

Reaffirm[ed] the church's commitment to advocacy for a national medical plan.

Encourage[d] presbyteries, sessions, and the members of congregations to be advocates for universal health care and to support advocacy efforts in their local communities to bring public and private entities together in this effort.

Encourage[d] members of Congress to recognize the importance of universal health care - that is, equal, accessible, affordable, and high-quality health care for all persons residing in our nation.

In 2008, the 218th General Assembly:

Endorse[d] in principle the provision of single-payer universal health care reform in which health care services are privately provided and publicly financed.

Direct[ed] the General Assembly Council, through appropriate offices including the National Health Ministries, the Washington Office, and the Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association (PHEWA), to advocate for, educate about, and otherwise pursue the goal of obtaining legislation that enacts single-payer, universal national health insurance as the program that best responds to the moral imperative of the gospel; monitoring progress toward this goal and reporting back to the next two General Assemblies (2010 and 2012).

Evangelism Sunday

Evangelism Sunday is September 27th.... Our theme this year is "The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood" (John 1:14, *The Message*). Each time I read this verse of scripture, I am touched by God's amazing love for the world. And the church is the body that reveals that love! So, on Evangelism Sunday, what would it look like for us to "move into our neighborhoods" with love and grace? For some churches this movement into the neighborhood will be a new thing... For others this movement will be part of what we are already doing. However, the key for all of us is to be the hands and feet of Christ in our neighborhoods. Steve Hayner, in the Evangelism Panel at the Big Tent, shared that part of his prayer each day would be that "his heart would break over the things that break God's heart."

What breaks God's heart? What breaks our hearts? How do we serve in ways that broken hearts are mended? And when we serve in these ways, do we find our broken hearts healed? I'd love to hear from you about these things that break God's heart and our hearts. It's an amazing thing that we can celebrate God's loving deliverance through resurrection power, and then go from that celebration to serve others in the name of Jesus.

For more information and resources, go to: <http://www.pcusa.org/goodnews/>

Ray Jones is the Coordinator for Evangelism for the Presbyterian Church (USA)

Headline: Local clergy call for lower interest rates

The following article appeared on Boston.com on July 23, 2009:

By Sean Sposito, Globe Correspondent

“A group of clergy members led a protest outside of the Federal Reserve Bank of...”

To see this recommendation, cut and paste it into a Web browser:

http://www.boston.com/business/ticker/2009/07/local_clergy_ca.html?s_campaign=8315

A Holistic Approach to Wellness

“Pastors work in a complex relationship network. New research shows that efforts to improve clergy health must go beyond eating well and exercise to account for the influence of congregations and denominational polity.” To read more of this article by Rae Jean Proeschold, which was published in the *Faith & Leadership* newsletter of the Duke Divinity School, go to:

<http://www.faithandleadership.duke.edu/features/articles/holistic-approach-wellness>

Campus Ministry Meeting on August 29

Dear Friends,

I am (until Oct Synod) convener of the New England Presbytery Partnership Group. As most of you know, the NEPPG sponsored and funded the New England Presbyterian Campus Initiative during the 2008-2009 period. Coordinator Kelsey Rice-Bogdan did wonderful work, yielding lots of information. The "Great Expectations" event on May 30 celebrated this and gave people a chance to reflect together. The final report of NEPCI and the letter from the May 30 event are [available upon request].

Both have specific recommendations and implications for important ministry, in a time when mainline denominations have been drastically cutting back on campus presence.

Because I (and others) believe it is too important to let this fine work just gather dust, I have offered to host a meeting for those interested from the 3 New England presbyteries to get together, brainstorm, and maybe shape some plans to offer to the PPG/Synod/presbyteries in response to the recommendations in the report and letter.

It will be on **Saturday, Aug 29, at the Burlington, MA Presbyterian Church** (site of the "Great Expectations" event). I'm thinking of starting at 10 am and going for 2-3 hours.

Will you let me know (soon) of your interest and possible availability to attend? If you responded previously, you don't need to do so again. Once we know who can come, I'll try to generate some questions/discussion starters. If you can't attend, your thoughts will nevertheless be very welcome.

Thanks, and hoping to hear from you,
Rod MacDonald
Pastor, Presbyterian Church in Burlington, MA

The Presbytery Office Needs Your Contact Information

With several upcoming opportunities for stewardship, triennium, and missions, it would be helpful to have full contact information for the individuals in each congregation who are responsible for the following areas of ministry:

Youth Pastor
Christian Education
Mission
Treasurer
Stewardship
Evangelism

Please have the church office or clerk of session forward as much of the following information as possible to our office: presbyteryofboston@verizon.net. Thank you in advance for your help.

Prayer Concerns & Celebrations

Tom and Pat Kepler's son, John, had heart surgery on August 19, and it went very well. John is now in the ICU and faces a long recuperation. Tom and Pat are grateful for your prayers and ask for your continued support as John recovers.

Prayers for Alice Hageman, who is recovering from surgery.

Continued prayers for Bob Ferguson, Gino Maini, and Don Wick.

Prayers for the Young family, who will be moving from Needham on August 21, heading to their new home in Tampa, FL! Terry, Rev. Cary, Katharine and Nutmeg have quite the road trip planned. They expect to be at their new home in Tampa beginning September 1.

Cindy Kohlmann has been traveling in South Africa and is due to return soon. Please pray for her safe return and for New England's missional partnership with South Africa.

Prayers for Fourth Church as they begin renovation work on their fellowship hall. *(cont. pg. 5)*

Prayers of thanksgiving - The Super Kids beach ministry at the Bend in the Road Beach in Edgartown, Martha's Vineyard, was a resounding success. The young adult group from the Ft. Square Presbyterian Church in Quincy, MA led this beach VBS. We give thanks for team leader Jon Wilson, the entire staff, and all the children touched by the outreach efforts.

September is Seminary Support Network month (formerly the Theological Education Fund) and during this time, we ask you to remember our seminaries, our seminary students, and those who are discerning a call to ministry in your prayers. Please also prayerfully consider giving 1% support to the SSN. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Rick Underwood at pastor@whitinpres.org.

Presbytery of Boston Meetings

AUGUST

27 – Council, 7:00, NPC.

SEPTEMBER

2 – CPM, Clarendon Hill

10 – Personnel, 12:30 Needham

14 – **Reports Deadline**

ICL board meeting, 3:30 at NPC

28 – Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Boston, Good Shepherd, Easton

Ordination Anniversaries

Michael Duda	9/1/79	30 years
Young Ghil Lee	9/15/94	15 years
Stan Johnson	10/5/86	23 years
John Chung	10/8/00	9 years
Horatio Valdez-Romero	10/9/59	50 years
Martha Spear	10/11/87	22 years
Aida Spencer	10/14/73	36 years
William Spencer	10/14/73	36 years
Allen Fairfax	10/24/04	5 years
John Buchanan	10/31/56	53 years

Congratulations and thank you!

E-Connection Classifieds

Good Shepherd in Easton and Hartford Street in Natick are actively seeking installed pastors.

Events Calendar

August 29 – *Campus Ministry* meeting, Presbyterian Church in **Burlington**. Time TBD.

Sept. 12 – *Deacons/Elders in the 21st Century Church*, 8 am to 3:30 pm, First Congregational Church in **Hopkinton**, MA. Sponsored by Barnabas Ministries. Registration deadline Sept. 4. For more information, go to: <http://www.barnabasministriesinc.org/>

September 19 – *Gospel Fest 2009*, 7 pm at Fourth Church in **Hyde Park**. Free food and raffle with great prizes! Suggested donation is \$10, with proceeds going to the church's tutoring program.

October 18 – “*One Book, Many Voices*,” with Liz Walker. Sponsored by the Massachusetts Bible Society, at Wilson Chapel, ANTS, **Newton Centre**. 7-9 pm with reception to follow. Also on October 19-22 at other locations in MA. Contact the MBS for more information: admin@massbible.org or 617-969-9404.

October 22-24 – “*Words That Matter: A Poetry & Liturgy Workshop with Poet Ann Weems*,” Evensong Retreat Center, **Harwich Port**, Cape Cod. For further information, call 508-432-0027 or go to www.evensongretreat.com

December 3 – Christmas with St. John's Bible, co-sponsored by the Massachusetts Bible Society and Salem Covenant Church, **Worcester**. Exhibit and lecture. More information will be forthcoming.

Reminder: The Presbytery of Boston Office Has Moved!

The office of the Presbytery of Boston, which had been located at 197 Herrick Road in Newton Centre (on the campus of Andover-Newton Theological Seminary), has relocated to Clinton, MA. We are now comfortably situated in the former manse of the Presbyterian Church in Clinton. Our new address and telephone are:

169A Chestnut Street
Clinton, MA 01510-3610
978-365-5200

Website: www.presbyteryofboston.org (unchanged)
Office email: presbyteryofboston@verizon.net (unchanged)
Wayne Parrish's email: presbyteryofboston.gp@verizon.net (unchanged)

Please note that the office of the Stated Clerk, Rev. Catherine MacDonald, remains in Burlington, MA. Her contact information is: 9 Independence Drive, Burlington, MA 01803. Phone: 781-273-2213; Fax: 781-238-4425. Email: bostonpres.sc@verizon.net.

