

Presbytery of Boston

E-Connection

August 31, 2010

General Assembly Mission Council

Thousands of people in the bateys of the Dominican Republic now have sources of safe drinking water. A widow's Galveston home is restored by blue-shirted Presbyterian volunteers. Korean students in New Jersey find respite through a new church development. These are a few of the recent compelling stories of God at work in and through the General Assembly Mission Council [<http://gamc.pcusa.org/>] (GAMC).

The GAMC is the mission agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Thirty-six elected members of the Council, chaired by Elder Carol Adcock, coordinate the church's work in light of General Assembly mission directions, objectives, goals, and priorities. Elder Linda Valentine, executive director, and more than four hundred staff members lead and coordinate the mission and ministry of the council.

The mission of the General Assembly Mission Council - to offer the world a visible witness of Jesus Christ - is carried out through six areas of ministry:

- 1** The Compassion, Peace, & Justice ministry area helps Presbyterians respond to the needs of the world's most vulnerable people.
- 2** Evangelism & Church Growth equips, empowers, and inspires Presbyterians to share their faith in Christ and get connected to a community of faith.
- 3** Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries/Presbyterian Women equips, connects, and inspires the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to welcome others and to be the beloved, multicultural community that God wants us to be.
- 4** Theology, Worship, & Education works with pastors, elders, and teachers to help congregations explore the riches of the gospel, worship the triune God, and help people know their faith so that they can better live their faith.
- 5** The office of Vocation supports the church's work related to discerning God's calling for life and ministry and to developing leaders as they answer that call.
- 6** The World Mission ministry area helps Presbyterians carry out Christ's Great Commission by sending mission personnel, equipping the church for mission, and empowering the global church through partnerships in more than one hundred countries around the world.

To learn more, visit <http://www.pcusa.org/missionyearbook>

Massachusetts Council of Churches

Environmental Justice Update

Save the Date: Bill McKibben on Boston Common Sept 7th

Greetings!

Knowing of your concern for the care of creation, we are writing to let you know of an upcoming opportunity to be a part of the national movement for clean energy.

A group of college students, accompanied by 350.org founder Bill McKibben, are embarking on a road trip from Unity College, Maine to Washington DC to deliver a solar panel to President Obama--the very panel that sat on the White House roof under Carter. This is part of the broader Put Solar On It campaign to encourage World Leaders to put solar on their roofs on the same day: 10/10/10, when thousands of people all over the world will be getting to work on climate solutions.

The road trip will be making a stop in Boston on Tuesday, September 7th. There will be a press conference with Bill McKibben and Massachusetts and Boston politicians around 6:00pm on the Boston Common, as well as a short march before the conference.

The Massachusetts Council of Churches invites you to come to this event, to march and to listen to Bill McKibben speak, so that we can together bear witness to our faith and help make the moral case for climate action.

Please contact us for more details @ council@masscouncilofchurches.org.

Quick Links...

www.masscouncilofchurches.org

<http://putsolaron.it/whitehouse>

www.350.org

Looking for a Piano – Can You Help?

First, Waltham is seeking a mid-size baby grand or grand piano in good repair to replace ours which is approaching the end of its life. We are hoping to find something that will better help lead God's people in worship. If your church or anyone you know has a piano they are looking to part with for a reasonable price, please let us know at churchlife@fpcwaltham.org.

Prayer Concerns

Prayers for Elder Jeanette Boone, whose son, Tracey Albert, passed away on July 29, and her family. Elder Boone is married to Perry Smith.

Cathy MacDougall, Clerk of Session at Fort Square, has recently completed intensive chemotherapy. Her prayer request is that the tumor will have shrunk enough for surgery to be performed next month. Cathy appreciates your keeping her in your prayers.

Continued prayers for the friends and families of Tom Little and his 9 co-workers. Tom was the leader of a team that was dedicated to medical mission work in Afghanistan; all members of the group were killed by the Taliban in early August. From Beverly Shank, a high-school friend of Tom and his wife, Libby: "Please pray for all of [the families and friends of the victims] and that God would raise others to continue the work."

A request for prayer from Jennifer Wegter-McNelly:

Dear Church,

Please hold in your prayers Arthur (Swee-Leong) Koh and his wife, Vivian. Arthur is a member of COTC and a candidate for ministry in the PC(USA) under the care of COTC. He came to Boston from Singapore to pursue an M. Div. degree at Boston University School of Theology, and we celebrated his graduation this spring. He has been working as a hospital chaplain this summer and was preparing to continue his theological studies at Boston College this fall.

Arthur has recently received devastating health news and needs our prayers and love. He has been diagnosed with kidney cancer, stage 4, which has metastasized. His doctors recommend surgery and chemotherapy to slow the cancer, but the prognosis is grim. He has made the decision to return to Singapore to seek further treatment there with the support of his extended family. Arthur will be flying to Singapore this Thursday, and Vivian will follow in about a week.

This news is a terrible shock for a young and previously healthy person. It is difficult to know where to locate hope when the hopes toward which he has been faithfully working—his call to ministry and teaching—are so suddenly interrupted. May God surround Arthur with grace, healing, and strength. We pray that his body might be strong, that effective treatment will be found, and that God's Spirit will push back the course of the cancer. We pray for healing and peace in his heart and for Vivian. May God's hope—elusive now—dawn for them in days and weeks ahead. May the power of our prayers, joining many others in the larger body of Christ who love him, carry him through this dark valley.

I know many of us will feel an urgent desire to respond and help in addition to praying. Arthur asks that we not call or email him right now as the next couple of days are very full with bringing closure to the medical work here and preparing to travel to Singapore. I have expressed our open-ended commitment to help in any way we can in

the days ahead and as Vivian prepares to leave their apartment here. She has promised to call if there is any practical help that we can provide.

One suggestion I have is that if anyone wishes to send letters or cards in the days ahead, we could collect them at the church and forward them so that Arthur can have them when he has the energy and space to receive them. He has also told me that he plans to email me updates from Singapore to share with the church here.

May God guide our prayers to support Arthur and Vivian. May God's wisdom and Spirit breathe hope and comfort into their hearts.

Peace in Christ, Jennifer Wegter-McNelly

Update from Jennifer on August 31: This week, Arthur is preparing for surgery and chemotherapy to slow the growth of the cancer, as well as for other treatments to maintain his strength.

To write to Arthur, please address your cards and letters to:

Swee-Leong Koh

Block 157, Yung Loh Road

#16-36

Singapore 610157,

Singapore

Prayer Celebrations

Horatio Valdez II and his wife, Gisela M. Cott Valdez, are "blessed and thrilled" to announce the birth of their daughter, Veronica Grace Cott Valdez, who was born on August 4 at Newton/Wellesley Hospital, weighing 6 lbs. 11 ounces. The Presentation will be this Sunday, September 5, at Primera Iglesia, by Rev. Alvaro Peña.

Bart and Priscilla Kelso will be serving as visiting scholars in the Philippines for six months, from October 2010 to April 2011. They were invited by Silliman University (www.su.edu.ph), a Presbyterian-affiliated school founded in 1901 and a member of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia.. Priscilla will be teaching a graduate course in English and American literature while Bart will be teaching Spiritual Formation and working with the Th.M. program in Mission Studies at the School of Theology. The Kelsos, who are retired, are looking forward to this as a missions opportunity in an academic setting. In 1996, they were also at Silliman University, where Priscilla had studied and taught, as volunteers-in-mission for the Worldwide Ministries of PCUSA.

Theological Conversation, October 17 - 18

The Presbytery of Boston's annual Theological Conversation will be Sunday, October 17 to Monday, October 18, with guest David Jones of the Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. The location will be Glastonbury Abbey, in Hingham, MA. More information will be forthcoming.

Events

September 3-26 – “Open Air” exhibit at the Nave Gallery, CHPC, 155 Powderhouse Blvd., **Somerville**. Opening reception Sept. 25 from 6-8 pm. See: www.navegallery.org

September 10 – “Thy Will Be Done” documentary film begins showing at the Museum of Fine Arts, **Boston**. Contact the MFA for film dates and times.

September 18 – “All in the Family” seminar, at the Presbyterian Church in **Burlington**, 9:00 to 4:00. \$15 per person; \$30 per church. This seminar will take a look at family systems theory and how it relates to church life, boundaries, assessing the health of our congregations and much more. The Rev. Dr. John Mokkaosian and the Rev. Dr. Dayl Hufford will conduct the program. As psychotherapists, clergy, and Clinical and Executive Directors of the New England Pastoral Institute who are continually providing consultation to congregations facing difficult circumstances, they are aptly qualified to address these issues for us. Please save the date and bring as many from your congregation as possible! Sponsored by CS&D.

October 1-2 - 34th Annual Racial Ethnic Convocation at the Stony Point Conference Ctr.

October 2 – *Gospel Fest* at Hyde Park Presbyterian Church, 7 pm. All proceeds from this event go to support HPPC's After-School Tutoring Program in its efforts to add a second day of tutoring. HPPC is located at 1109 River Street, **Hyde Park**. For more information, please contact Beth Wieman at: bethwieman@hotmail.com

October 5 – “*Transforming Divisive Conversation*” a one-day workshop that will explore ways that congregational leaders can deal with divisive issues, covering topics such as preparing for conflict, preventing corrosive interaction, and helping members have constructive conversation. 51 Kondazian Street, **Watertown**, MA. Space is limited. Register now! The cost is \$125-250 (sliding scale).

<http://www.publicconversations.org/workshops/transforming>

October 17-18 – *Theological Conversation with David Jones* from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, at Glastonbury Abbey, **Hingham**, MA. More information will be forthcoming.

October 18-22 – 2010 “*Transformation Conference*,” sponsored by Grace Presbytery and the PC(USA) Office of Church Growth, at First Presbyterian Church in Fort Worth, TX. Online registration is available at:

<http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/church-growth/church-transformation/>

October 23 – Presbyterian Partnership Group (PPG) Presbyterian Women’s meeting at First Presbyterian Church in **Worcester**. The program will include Fair Trade Shopping – Displays – Mission Trip Reports – Greetings from PW Synod guests – Music – Lunch – Worship with Communion – and will close with a special passing of the peace. Registration is \$12.00. For further information, contact Beth Denier at 781-231-9247 or a.denier@verizon.net.

October 25-28 – *Presbytery Pastoral Care Network Annual Meeting*. San Francisco Seminary. “Our conference this year is focused on helping presbyteries learn about practical models for supporting pastors in ways that strengthen their leadership capacities, deepen their spiritual life, and encourage accountability for effective ministries.”
www.pastoralcarenetwork.org

November 4-7 - "*The Changing Contours of World Mission and Christianity*," sponsored by the Boston Theological Institute. For more information about this **Boston** event, see page 1 of this newsletter.

****Scholarships for seminars and conferences are available through the East Boston Leadership and Education Fund; please contact CS&D (chair-person Martha Spear) or Wayne Parrish for further information.**

SAVE THE DATE!

2010 Beck Lecture Series

Featuring

HARVEY COX!



Moses, the Exodus and Archeology

Monday, September 20, 2010 7:30p

Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, MA

Jeremiah, Job and the Biblical View of Suffering

Monday, October 4, 2010 7:30p

First Congregational Church in Stockbridge, Stockbridge, MA

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Jesus in Jerusalem: The Gospels and the New Research

Monday, October 18 2010 7:30p

First Parish Church in Weston, Weston, MA

Where Paul Stands After the New Scroll Finds

Monday, October 25, 2010 7:30p

Salem Covenant Church , Worcester, MA

Rescuing Revelation from the Religious Right

Monday, November 1, 2010 7:30p

Old South Church, Boston, MA

Details: By email admin@massbible.org or call (617) 969-9401