

Presbytery of Boston E-Connection December 17, 2009



Advent 2009

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

The dawn from on high will break upon us ... to guide us in the way of peace (Luke 1:78-79).

Earlier this fall, I traveled to the Middle East. The trip included a stop in Bethlehem, where I had the opportunity to visit an ancient cave that is similar to what a cave stable might have looked like when Joseph and Mary arrived over 2000 years ago.

The cave stable was small, cool, very quiet, and peaceful. It was not hard to imagine the space being used as a birthing place for a child.

While there, I thought about how that quiet, peaceful spot is located in a wider region that is marked with ongoing violence and tension. I thought about other areas in the world where people's lives are uprooted by such things as famine and warfare, and I wondered about the quiet places one might find there.

I reflected on how, closer to home, we have seen our own level of tension heightened this year because of an economic crisis, rising unemployment, mass shootings, a flu epidemic, ongoing deployment of troops, and so much more. I have heard about and seen firsthand how difficult these stressors have been on our congregations across the denomination. Mission giving, programs, building plans, and staff have been reduced in an effort to make ends meet.

It has been a difficult year. Yet, a quiet, confident strength has been present across the church from which amazing things have happened.

I have heard stories of compassion, generosity, and hope during these tough times. Food pantries, shelters, health clinics, employment training, and countless other creative approaches have been taken to help meet the needs of neighbors and strangers alike.

During the Advent and Christmas seasons, I am reminded anew of the importance of the peaceful birth of Jesus in that quiet cave stable in Bethlehem so long ago. The circumstances surrounding his birth didn't stay peaceful for long, but the very presence of the Christ child was anchored completely in God's redeeming love and hope for the entire world.

From that quiet beginning came the Word-made-flesh, breaking upon us to guide us in the way of peace. May it be so again this year – for each of you, for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), for the church worldwide, and for this very world itself.

The peace of the Christ child be with you.



Gradye Parsons
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

Presbyterian Women -- Coming Events

“Leaving FOOTPRINTS in the Sand” – The Spring Spiritual Retreat will be held at Christ the King Retreat House in Syracuse, NY, April 23 – 25, 2010. The retreat leader is Barbara Johnson from Cayuga-Syracuse Presbytery. The cost for two nights lodging (single room), all meals, and the program is \$195.00 prior to April 9, 2010 and \$215.00 after that. The registration deadline is April 15. Scholarships are available. For more information, contact Gail Banks at 105 Whedon Rd., Apt. 20, Syracuse, NY 13219.

“Celebrating a Decade of Sisterhood” – The 2010 Women's Healing Retreat will be held at St. Joseph by the Sea in South Mantoloking, NJ, Friday, April 30 – Monday, May 3, 2010. For more information, contact Kim Nodoro at 5 Coolidge Ct., Califon, NJ 07830 or kimno@aol.com.

Horizons Bible Study Workshop – “Journeys through Revelation: Apocalyptic Hope for Today” by Barbara Rossing. The workshop will be held at the Stony Point Conference Center in Stony Point, NY, May 14 – 16, 2010.

“Meeting Our Sisters in South Dakota” - September 9 – 16, 2010. PW's 2010 USA Mission Experience will provide an opportunity to meet with Presbyterian sisters living on reservations in four locations in South Dakota. Visit www.pcusa.org/nativeamerican to learn more.

A Sweet the Sound Christmas

Old American Christmas songs, Caroling, Candlelight

featuring Burns and Lorraine Stanfield
Saturday, December 19, 4 - 5:30 p.m.
Central Congregational Church / Hope Church,
85 Seaverns, Jamaica Plain, MA
Free will offering to support local community work.

“Church Outside The Box” - A Conversation with Rev. Bill Golderer

Andover-Newton Theological Seminary, January 21-22, 2010

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| <u>Friday, Jan. 21</u> Worcester Hall (Peck Conference Room) 6pm: Dinner 7-9pm: Remarks and Conversation | <u>Saturday, Jan. 22</u> Worcester Hall (Large Classroom) 9:30am: Continental Breakfast 10-11:30am: Workshop |
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*Cost: \$15 (includes admission to both events, dinner, and breakfast).
Please RSVP at email@spear1968.com or 978 587 2125.

Bill Golderer is the founding pastor of the Broad Street Ministry in the heart of the Arts District of Philadelphia, an emergent Christian community that emphasizes hospitable outreach, civic involvement, and creative expression. Prior to that, Bill has served as founding Director of the Center for Church Life at Auburn Theological Seminary in New York City, where he was also a lecturer in Reformed theology at Union Theological Seminary. Prior to *that*, he served as Associate Pastor at the Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago.

Learn more about Rev. Golderer and his current ministry at www.BroadStreetMinistry.org

Sponsored by the Presbytery of Boston

Worcester Resettlement Project *and* Burma Border Projects.

Since Worcester Resettlement is not a 501(c)3 yet, we are working under the Burma Border Projects name for financial donations. So checks should be made out to Burma Border Projects, with Worcester Resettlement Project in the subject line (if they want to donate to WRP) Our contact person is Lesa McWalters (at 508-865-513), through the First Presbyterian Church of Worcester (508-852-2111) - that's me! - If they have questions or want more information about what we do and who we are. They can mail donations to:

Burma Border Projects

P.O. Box 20173
West Side Station
Worcester, MA 01602

or to me directly at:

Lesa McWalters
50 Maple St.
Millbury MA 01527
lesamcwalters@yahoo.com

We are working on getting an email address, website, and down the road, an actual storage/office facility - this is why we need to raise some money. WRP has only been in existence since 7/2009 so we are a new project - but we have accomplished so much in that short period of time!

Thanks for your support. Let me know if there's anything else you need.

Lesa McWalters
worc.resettlement@yahoo.com

Upcoming Events

January 14-16 - led by PC(USA) Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy Coordinator, Chris Iosso. It will be a lively conversation about race, economic justice and the church. Cost: \$200. Stony Point, NY. See www.stonypointcenter.org

March 19 – 22 – “*A Place to Call Home: Immigrants, Refugees, and Displaced Peoples*” Ecumenical Advocacy Days. Washington D.C. website:

www.advocacydays.org ; email: info@advocacydays.org

March 21-23 – “*Ministering to the Missing Generation,*” led by author The Reverend Carol Howard Merritt, pastor at Western Presbyterian Church, Washington D.C. Cost is \$230. Stony Point, NY. See www.stonypointcenter.org

April 24 – 27 – “The Leading Edge -- A multicultural/multiracial future” Guests: Diana Butler Bass, Robert P. Jones, Eric Law, Jacqui Lewis, Traci West, Paul Tough, Michael Livingston. NYC, NY www.middleproject.org (212) 477-0666

Prayer Concerns & Celebrations

Alice Hageman had knee replacement surgery at the beginning of December and requests your prayers for rapid healing and restored mobility. Cards are, of course, always welcome.

Continued prayers for Elder Kathy Ryan, Elder, Ft. Square, who was recently diagnosed with lymphoma.

Horatio Valdez II requests your continued prayers for his mother, Myriam Quinonez de Valdez, and his family.

E-Connection Classifieds

* A member of the Hyde Park church has a sister in Nigeria who is starting a new Presbyterian Church there. She is interested in finding some choir robes in good condition for an adult choir. They are not focused on any particular color, although they do not want black. If you can donate choir robes in various sizes for about 30 people, please contact Beth Wieman at ew8181@aol.com.

* Church of the Covenant is currently seeking applicants for the position of YOUTH DIRECTOR. Applicants are requested to post or e-mail a letter expressing interest and a resume *to*:

Church of the Covenant
Attn: Youth Director Search Committee
67 Newbury Street
Boston, MA 02116
cotcbos@hotmail.com

Applications received by November 30, 2009 will be given first consideration. Please contact me if you have questions or require additional information. Thank you for your interest and assistance.

Sincerely,

Brad Day, Chair,
Personnel Committee
bradleyday@comcast.net
617-943-4229