

Presbytery of Boston E-Connection December 21, 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

Advocacy Support Team

The Advocacy Support Team was established according to the new bylaw voted by POB on Nov 16. PJC moderator appointed Mary Lou Smith (elder, Worcester), Doris Soulé (elder, Sudbury) and Rod MacDonald (minister, Burlington) to begin work immediately on determining the need for support, addressing the question of funding for the appeal to synod by the prosecution in the decision of Presbytery of Boston v. Rev. Jean Southard.

The team met three times in just over two weeks. At its first meeting, it established a mission statement, part of which reads: "Our work...will be done with transparency, and with the goals of fairness and justice, and uppermost, the building up of the body of Christ." The team met with trustees Bill McIvor and Ken Dewar for a clear picture of current POB finances, and with prosecuting committee members Rev. Kevin Manuel and elder Alex Wei. The PC expressed its request for a budget for legal consultation and contingencies, and this request was the subject of negotiations and agreement between the AST and PC. After consultation with the accused, it was determined that Jean does not have need for financial support for counsel.

A report was made to Presbytery Council (as the new bylaw stipulates) and Council held a well-attended special meeting on Dec. 7 at Needham. After balanced and thoughtful discussion, the report was approved. At a subsequent meeting of POB trustees on Dec. 16, approval was given to funding as requested by the Council.

Highlights of this action: An amount not to exceed \$16,00, divided as \$7,500 in attorney fees and \$8,500 in contingency funds; also, payment of an outstanding attorney bill of about \$5,500. (All but about \$1,000 of this incurred after the POB trial and before the Sept. 28 meeting which approved \$1,000 of funding; these expenses were related to filing of the appeal charges with synod). Since PC's current attorney is non-PCUSA and cannot represent it at trial, any costs of a potential PCUSA counsel is to come from the \$8,500 contingency funds. All contractual arrangements must be made with an officer of presbytery, and requests for payment must be made through the AST. Any donations which the prosecuting committee might receive from interested individuals, churches, etc. should be used to defray the expense to the unrestricted

funds of the trustees - and would be welcome. Approval of these funds should not be construed as indicating approval of funds for a further appeal to GA.

The use of this money is a further painful reduction in funds often vital to POB, and its churches (for loans for needed repairs etc.). The AST report stated its belief that as the presbytery is obligated by D-11.0302 to provide for the costs of counsel for the accused, it has an obligation *by extension* to provide for *any cost reasonable and necessary for the work of the Prosecuting Committee*.

AST members are available to speak to anyone interested. It remains in place for at least as long as the current case is being appealed. The full report of the Council meeting will be in the January stated meeting packet.

Epiphany Open House
6 p.m. Wed., Jan. 6, 2010
Please join Carole and Wayne
for sandwiches and dessert
Epiphany sharing
8:00 p.m.
r.s.v.p.
978-369-1931 home
wayneparrish@comcast.net
131 Independence Rd.
Concord, MA 01742

Worcester Resettlement Project and Burma Border Projects.

A new thrust to VBS at the First Presbyterian Church in Worcester (508-852-2111) focused on reaching out to children in the community. An outgrowth of that initiative has been on-going ministry with refugees from Burma who have been resettled in the Worcester area by INS. Members of the congregation are adopting children and families for holiday gifts and food. Work with schools and outreach to families in Burma is also part of the mission.

(continued on p. 4)

Donations can be made to Burma Border Projects, with Worcester Resettlement Project in the subject line and mailed to:

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

For further information, our contact person at First Presbyterian Church in Worcester is Lesa McWalters, lesamcwalters@yahoo.com; 50 Maple St., Millbury MA 01527 (508-865-513), or you can contact Worcester Resettlement Project at worc.resettlement@yahoo.com. WRP has only been in existence since 7/2009 so they are a new project - but they have accomplished so much in that short period of time and generated a new vision for mission and multicultural outreach in the local communities and churches. A Power Point presentation will be posted shortly on the Presbytery of Boston website (www.presbyteryofboston.org).

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

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

| | |
|---|---|
| <u>Thursday, Jan. 21</u> Worcester Hall (Peck Conference Room) 6pm: Dinner 7-9pm: Remarks and Conversation | <u>Friday, Jan. 22</u> Worcester Hall (Large Classroom) 9:30am: Continental Breakfast 10-11:30am: Workshop |
|---|---|

****Please note: Previous advertisements for this event have contained errors in the dates. The above-given days of the week and month are correct!***

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's
Church Support and Development Committee***

Refugee Immigration Ministry International Concert

DATE: May 5, 2010

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

LOCATION: Old South Church, Copley Square

Nomination of Choirs

We are seeking choirs from a variety of cultures, faiths and countries to join the already exciting group of performers for our

Second Annual International Concert

Please send an email providing contact information for the choir's leadership. Choir selection will be finalized at the January 11th Events Committee meeting.

Refugee Immigration Ministry is an interfaith, multi-cultural organization which, with the help of volunteers, responds to the needs of traumatized, uprooted people from war-torn countries by offering community-based support as they adjust to their new life. We welcome you to participate in RIM programs and be enriched in this process.

Refugee Immigration Ministry

142 Pleasant Street

Malden, Massachusetts 02148

Phone: 781-322-1011

Fax: 781-322-1013

Web-site: www.r-i-m.net

Other Upcoming Events

January 6 – Epiphany Open House at the Parrish’s home. (See invitation details on page 2.) Your “RSVP” is appreciated.

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

January 21 – 22 – “*Church Outside the Box: A Conversation with Bill Golderer,*” ANTS. See article on page 3 of this newsletter for details.

January 23 - Massachusetts Council of Churches Annual Meeting, Assumption College, 500 Salisbury St., Worcester; registration at 9 a.m.; worship at 9:30 followed by business meeting.

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 23 – 25 - “*Leaving FOOTPRINTS in the Sand*” – The PW Spring Spiritual Retreat will be held at Christ the King Retreat House in Syracuse, NY. 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.

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. For more information: www.middleproject.org or (212) 477-0666.

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

May 5 – Refugee Immigration Ministry Concert, Old South Church, Boston, 7:00 p.m.

May 14 – 16 - *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.

Presbytery of Boston Meetings

JANUARY

5 – Nominating Committee, 11 a.m., Newton P.C.

7 – Council meeting, 7 p.m., Newton P.C.

10 – Reports Deadline

14 – COM, 7 p.m., Newton P.C.

25 – Presbytery Meeting, at The Presbyterian Church in Needham

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.

Good Shepherd is planning an installation for their new pastor (if the way be clear) Sunday afternoon, January 31.

Fourth Presbyterian Church will celebrate its anniversary with a gala event on January 31.

“Palestinian Christians call for just peace in Palestine: *Kairos Palestine Document* seeks to energize Middle East peace efforts around the world”

If you would like to read this article recently published by the *Presbyterian News Service*, go to:

<http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/091087.htm>

Do you want to show immigrants and refugees that they have not been forgotten? Be a Spiritual Care Giver!

Training Dates: January 21st – March 4th, 2010
(Thursday evenings 6:00-9:00 pm)

Refugee Immigration Ministry (RIM) works with Homeland Security to offer chaplaincy services to immigrant detainees in Suffolk County House of Correction or to clients in the RIM office in Malden. This form of chaplaincy involves one-on-one active listening. Volunteers visit at least once a month in the evening and attend a monthly support meeting. There is a special need for volunteers with other language skills.

Participants in this comprehensive training focus on their personal development throughout the process. Training topics include active listening skills, anti-racism, trauma, spiritual resources, self-care, legal issues, personality development, and small group work. Spiritual Care Givers doing prison chaplaincy will also attend orientation in the House of Correction and the facility will require a background check.

Interested volunteers go through an application and interview process before starting training. RIM is an interfaith organization that welcomes people of different spiritual, language, and cultural backgrounds. RIM charges a fee of \$25 per trainee for materials.

Applications are available on the RIM Web site: www.r-i-m.net or by calling RIM: 781-322-1011. Contact: Jennifer Guterman, Volunteer Coordinator

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.

(continued on p. 8)

* 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

* The Massachusetts Council of Churches is seeking an Administrative Coordinator to assist the Executive Director and Associate Director in the administrative work of the Council. The position is a 35-hour-per-week, benefited position. The focus of this position is to serve as a communications, financial, and administrative coordinator. Send resume no later than January 4th to admin@masscouncilofchurches.org. Please no phone calls. For additional information, visit the MCC website: www.masscouncilofchurches.org.