

Presbytery of Boston December E-Connection

Stewardship Resources Upgraded

Dear Colleagues in Ministry,

When he was six years old, my son folded his hands in earnest, scrunched his face, and began his nighttime prayers. “Dear God, thank you for eyes to see people, animals, and your world. Thank you for ears to hear, noses to smell, mouths to talk and taste things...” Then he opened one eye and whispered to me, “Do you think I should say something about the esophagus?” I tried not to fall off the bed or burst into laughter but simply told him it was good to say whatever he wanted and God would listen.

When it comes to stewardship, we would do well to take our cues from the common sense of a six-year-old. We give thanks for everything—including the esophagus! Some have said that stewardship is everything we do after we say, “I believe.” It is the way we order our lives in response to God’s great love.

Truth is, stewardship is nothing less than the way we stay spiritually alive. Too often we get it all turned around. The reason we give is because God has imparted upon us God’s own generous spirit, not simply to meet a projected church budget. Of course it follows that when we are alive in Christ, we love, we show hospitality, and we are people of generous hearts. Consequently, whole faith communities benefit and receive the resources to bear visible witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Your General Assembly Council staff is taking this year to give stewardship resources new life. In August we welcomed the Reverend Doctor Kevin Park as Associate for Theology: Stewardship. Kevin will help us evaluate existing resources for a consistent Reformed theological foundation and for effectiveness that matches congregations’ needs today. Some materials will be upgraded. New models and delivery systems will replace other resources. An exciting shared project with Presbyterian Publishing Corporation is to add a web-based stewardship component to www.presbyterianleader.com this spring.

The Stewardship website on pcusa.org currently provides numerous materials including sermon samples, annual theme materials, and downloadable resources especially

designed for pastors and chairs of stewardship committees. In the coming year, look for video downloads, bulletin insert templates for congregational and presbytery stories, and guidelines for creating your own video interviews and mission interpretation spots that can be imbedded on your congregation's website or presented at church gatherings.

Giving magazine (with an eight-page annual stewardship campaign guide) is free by ordering online or through Presbyterian Distribution Services. The magazine is produced by the Ecumenical Stewardship Center of which we are partners. The Children's Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study, written by Lib Caldwell and Kathy Hoop, provides current stories of Presbyterians engaged in bearing witness to God's love here in the U.S. and around the world and describes specific ways children can give, pray, and take action in response to those stories of faith.

Two dynamic training events are planned for 2009. The Stewardship Kaleidoscope II Conference is March 9–11 in Kansas City, MO. Key presenters are Shannon Webster and Laura Mendenhall. Visit www.heartlandpby.org/kaleidoscope. A national Stewardship & Investment Conference will be one of ten partner conferences at the Big Tent on June 11–13 in Atlanta, GA. Key presenters are Karl Travis and Rodger Nishioka. www.pcusa.org/bigtent

As part of the strategic goals and objectives of the 2009-2010 Mission Work Plan, we expect these efforts to result in a 10% increase among pastors and church leaders who feel equipped to ask members to give generously of their lives and resources as a natural expression of their faith. As a result, our lives are enriched and the church's witness is expanded. Thanks be to God for the esophagus and all good gifts of life and faith!

Grace and peace,

Rev. Jon Brown

Director, Mission Interpretation

“Tithes That Bind”

Jan Gough wrote an article for the Fall 2008 issue of *Hungryhearts*, the quarterly journal of Reformed spirituality, published by the PC(USA)'s Office of Spiritual Formation. The theme of the issue is “What's in Your Wallet?” and Jan's article, “Tithes That Bind,” begins on page 6. You may access Jan's article through the *Hungryhearts* website:

<http://www.pcusa.org/spiritualformation/hungryhearts/>

Bruce Reyes-Chow Schedules Webcast

The Reverend Bruce Reyes-Chow, Moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), will host a conversation with Beau Weston, author of *Rebuilding the Presbyterian Establishment*, during a web cast Tuesday, Dec. 9, from noon to 1:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time (3:00 to 4:00 p.m. Eastern time). Tune in to www.ustream.tv/channel/moderator-musings for the webcast. If you are interested in reading Weston's paper, see www.pcusa.org/re-formingministry/papers/rebuilding.pdf.

Subway Signs an Agreement with CIW!

Dear Friends:

Great news!! Just this afternoon, Subway signed an agreement with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers to improve farm workers' wages and address human rights abuses in the fields of its Florida tomato suppliers. Details about the agreement are forthcoming soon on www.ciw-online.org.

The agreement was reached as the CIW and members of the religious, human rights and student communities, gathered at Subway's purchasing cooperative, IPC, in Miami this morning, to launch the Subway NE Tour. A signing ceremony took place inside IPC with Subway and CIW representatives. The CIW's Tour will continue to journey through NC, Washington, DC, Baltimore, Philadelphia [**Dec. 5**], **Boston [Dec. 6]**, **Providence [Dec. 6]**, New Haven & Milford, CT [**Dec. 7 & 8**] and New York City [**Dec. 9 & 10**] in the coming week, however the focus will shift from Subway to the rest of the food industry. Now that Subway, the largest fast-food buyer of Florida tomatoes, has joined Yum!, McDonald's, Burger King, and Whole Foods Market in working with the CIW, its time for the rest of the grocery and fast-food corporations to join their counterparts and partner with the CIW to elevate human rights for farm workers in their own supply chains. Keep watch for the latest developments on the Tour at www.pcusa.org/fairfood and www.ciw-online.org!

For more information about specific events, or to help organize an event in your community, contact the Rev. Noelle Damico, National Coordinator of the PC(USA) Campaign for Fair Food and Jessica Bass, Intern with the PC(USA) CFF from Yale Divinity School at Noelle.damico@pcusa.org or Jessica.bass@yale.edu. And keep an eye on the websites-- www.ciw-online.org and www.pcusa.org/fairfood -- in the coming days for more information on the exciting tour!

Peace,
Noelle and Jessica

Mark your calendars now!
Empowering Leadership Workshop III

Feb. 6-7, 2009

How might pastors and session leaders develop the trust to truly share effective leadership?

Alban Institute Consultant Ed White will be with us again to focus on Leadership vs. Management. Last year we viewed 5 Dysfunctions of a Team – summary below. It would be helpful (though not necessary) if sessions could view this before attending. The DVD, book, and study guide are available; just contact the office at 617-244-4766 or presbyteryofboston@verizon.net. More information (i.e., location, time, etc.) will be forthcoming.

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

Dysfunction 1: Absence of Trust

Dysfunction 2: Fear of Conflict

Dysfunction 3: Lack of Commitment

Dysfunction 4: Avoidance of Accountability

Dysfunction 5: Inattention to Results

Join us at the Big Tent!

June 11–13, 2009 • Atlanta, Georgia

Big Tent is a first-of-its-kind event scheduled for June 11-13, 2009, in Atlanta under the theme, “... and the word became flesh.”

There will be some common meals and worship services, a shared exhibit hall, some common workshop sessions and a Saturday evening celebration event.

[Ten Presbyterian Church \(U.S.A.\) ministries and groups will hold their conferences in conjunction with the Big Tent event:](#) the Healthy Ministry Conference, the Presbyterian Communicators’ Network Conference, the National Multicultural Church Conference, the Stewardship and Investment Conference, the Evangelism and Church Growth Conference, the National Elders Conference, the Peacemaking Conference, the PHEWA Social Justice Biennial Conference, the Racial Ethnic Convocation and the New Immigrants Ministries Convocation.

Registration will be open in December. Visit: <https://www.pcusa.org/bigtent/>

Celebrate the season of Advent by joining GBIO

for a celebration of Las Posadas

What is Las Posadas:

It commemorates the immigrant journey of Mary and Joseph. It begins with a parade of faithful souls and is followed by an afternoon of fellowship, music, and food. It is a unique firsthand experience of a powerful immigrant tradition that is as relevant today as it was 2,000 years ago. This is a great way for communities of faith to celebrate dignity and justice with each other and some of our most marginalized members of society.

When: Sunday, December 7, 2008 at 3 p.m.

Rain/Snow Date: December 14, 2008

Where: Boston Common

The open procession starts at the Park Street T station and finishes with a

Traditional Fiesta at: 4:30 to 6 p.m.

Offices of SEIU 615—26 West Street, 3rd Floor, Boston, MA 02111

If you are interested in going, we will meet in the OSC narthex at 2:30 PM on December 7th. If you are unable to participate in the parade but would like to join the celebration afterwards you may meet the group at 4:30 at the offices of SEIU 615 at 26 West St. in Downtown Crossing. If you plan on attending please contact me in case the event is rescheduled due to inclement weather.

Thanks,
Alliea

To contact The Greater Boston Interfaith Organization call 617-825-5600 or email office@gbio.org

A Call for Choirs

“We will be holding an International Concert on April 29, 2009 at Old South Church. We are looking for choirs to participate. This is being designed according to the Interfaith Concert given in Washington D.C. by the Interfaith Conference. I was responsible for their concert in 1993 and 1994. Dr. Douglas Major was then the Choir Master at Washington National Cathedral. He is now in Marblehead. He is eager to help us bring this wonderful event to Boston.

We are in the process of locating choirs. We think there is an Episcopal Choir which is Spanish, an Roman Catholic Choir which is from Congo, Rwandan and Indian Dancers,

(continued on page 6)

and hopefully the choir from Old South Church (still pending). We want to open with the

Islamic Call to Prayer. We want to find a Brazilian, Korean, or other culture choir from the Presbytery. Could you assist us with this search? Any recommendations would be very helpful.

Thank you again for your support and encouragement.”

Ruth Bersin, Director
Refugee Immigration Ministry

Email: ruth.rim@verizon.net

Presbytery of Boston Meeting Calendar

December

- 4 – COM, 7:00, NPC
- 6 – Council Retreat, 8-1, Walker Center
- 8 – ICL, 3:30, NPC
- 10 – CPM, 5:00, Presbytery office
- 11 – CS&D, 7:30, Presbytery office

January

- 6 – Nominating, 11:30, NPC
CPM, 5:00, Presbytery office
- 8 – Council, 7:00, NPC
- 12 – **Reports Deadline**
ICL, 3;30, NPC
- 15 – COM, 7:00, NPC
- 26 – Presbytery meeting at Quincy Young Sang, Quincy

Prayer Celebrations & Concerns

Christina Romer, mother of Fourth Church Deacon Katie Romer, has been selected by President-Elect Obama to be among his lead finance advisers.

Eben I. Forbes is the new Executive Director of The Community Day Center of Waltham.

Prayers for Emadel Ramsay, who is recovering from a fall. *(continued on page 7)*

Prayers for Diane Cusumano, who is recuperating from knee surgery.

Prayers for Peg Ferguson, who is recuperating from spinal surgery.

Wren Collé asks for your continued prayers for her family, especially for her father.

Check with Jan if you need further details.

A Note of Gratitude

At the November meeting of the Presbytery of Boston, I was presented with a gift from the Moderator and Personnel Committee. This was a certificate for a garden center near my home, with which I might buy a flowering shrub or tree to plant in memory of my mother. My family and I are deeply touched by their thoughtfulness and generosity and are grateful for their special kindness. We are also very appreciative of the loving support demonstrated to us throughout this difficult year by many presbytery members through their cards, email messages, phone calls, and assurances of being remembered in prayers. As my father's health declines, I ask that you please continue to pray for our family.

Yours in Christ,
Wren Collé

Upcoming Events

2008

December 7 – Las Posadas celebration (**rain/snow date Dec. 14**). Sponsored by the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization. Begins at 3:00 at the **Boston Common**. See article on p. 5 of this newsletter.

December 10 – St. Petersburg Men's Ensemble Concert at **Clinton Presbyterian Church**, 7:00 p.m. Tickets: \$10, Children under 12 and Seniors: \$5. All proceeds from the ticket sales go to the Presbyterian Church Community Services. Tickets are good for both the concert and admission to the Museum of Russian Icons in Clinton, MA. See: <http://www.museumofrussianicons.org/calendar.php>

December 14 – **Fourth Presbyterian Church** celebrates their new roof and siding and their 138th anniversary with a “Raise the Roof” party.

2009

January 25 – Service at 2:00 to celebrate and rededicate the recently renovated sanctuary at **Needham Presbyterian Church**.

February 6-7 – **Empowering Leadership III with Alban Institute Consultant Ed White**. Information about location, time, etc. will be forthcoming.

(continued on page 8)

February 18-19 - *Presbyterian Global Fellowship Winter Gathering* at Peachtree Presbyterian Church. Reggie McNeal will be the featured presenter. Schedule and more

details will be updated at www.pgfconference.org. East Boston Fund scholarships are available. Contact the Presbytery Office if you are interested or need more details.

March 9-11 – “Stewardship Kaleidoscope” Presbyterian Stewardship Conference. Kansas City, MO. See: www.heartlandpby.org/kaleidoscope.

March 13-16 – “*Enough for All Creation*” in Washington D.C. Join us at the 7th annual Ecumenical Advocacy Days, as we explore ways to bring about a world with 'Enough for All Creation'. Learn about the connections between climate change, migration and poverty in the U.S. and around the world. Come together with faith-based advocates and activists from across the United States in the nation's capitol as we discuss the abundance of our world and how it can be allocated in a way that is fair and just for all Creation. Register now at www.advocacydays.org

March 15-18 - "*Conversations on Renewal and Transformation in Mainline Congregations*" with Diana Butler Bass, Marcus J. Borg, and Brian D. McLaren. Louisville Seminary will welcome this celebrated trio of church leaders/scholars at the Seminary's annual Festival of Theology. Register online.

June 2-4 – 2009 Interim Ministry Network Conference, Pittsburgh, PA. See: <http://www.imnedu.org/>

June 11-13 – The Big Tent. Event to feature conferences by ten PC(USA) ministries and groups. (New Website with promotional video just launched at [https://www.pcusa.org/bigtent/.](https://www.pcusa.org/bigtent/))

Don't miss the mission project flyer on the following page!

Mission Project for your congregation



Eyeglasses and Cell Phones



No longer usable to the owner,
They may be valuable to some one else.

Your congregation can begin the new year
collecting eyeglasses and cell phones.

Eyeglasses will go to Eyes for the Needy
where volunteer opticians evaluate, sort, repair and
eventually make them available to those not able to purchase new eyeglasses.

Cell Phones will go to an animal shelter
and a facility for aging services.
They will be dismantled, recycled and the money from their sale will support these
agencies.

It's not hard.
Put a box in your church. Advertise that these items are useful to others.
Collect them over a month or two and
Bring them to the March Presbytery Meeting
where these gifts will be dedicated.