

Presbytery of Boston
E-Connection
April 2, 2009

"On Not Knowing Where We Are Going"

Passover begins next week, and I am always struck at how the story of slavery and freedom impacts lives today, and is not just a nice story about the past. "And thou shall relate this story to thy children in that day, saying, 'This is done on account of that which the Lord God did unto me, when I came forth out of Egypt.' " Day by day we refuse to leave our own slavery, fearful of who will lead us, and where we might be headed. In the midst of today's economic crisis, leaders in the church recognize the need for safety and security, as well as a justified fear of the unknown. The 40 years of wandering in the wilderness helps us to understand why people are continually asking "Where will this take us?" There seems to be comfort in knowing the destination, or how we will fix the mess we find ourselves in.

Unfortunately, knowing where we are going may encourage us to stop seeing and hearing. Moving ahead in a trance-like sleep, we don't see things that we pass by and we fail to pay attention to all that is around us. Not knowing where you are going creates more than uncertainty; it fosters a SENSE OF ALIVENESS, an appreciation of the particulars around you. It wakes you up and grabs your full attention in much the same way that illness does. The truth is that we are always moving toward mystery, and so we are far closer to what is real when we do not see our destination clearly.

As leaders in the church it is embarrassing to admit that we don't know where things are headed in the PCUSA. What we can proclaim is that just as God led the people through the wilderness journey, God will be with us wherever the journey might take us. And why does God promise to personally send the Holy Spirit to guide and comfort us? Rachel Naomi Remen, in her book, My Grandfather's Blessings, comments on the Passover Story, noting "I think the struggle toward freedom is too important for God to leave to others. And this is so because only the people who become free can serve God's holy purposes and restore the world. Only those who are not enslaved by something else can follow the goodness in them."

As we approach Holy Week, we do know how that story ends. But where new life in the resurrection of Christ leads the church is always being worked out anew. May the power of the resurrected Christ break your bonds of slavery, set you free, and give you eyes to see and ears to hear as we together we move deeper into the mystery of God's love.

Wayne Parrish, General Presbyter

Prayer Concerns & Celebrations

Prayers for Kyung Moon Yoon, whose mother passed away in Korea.

Prayers for Susan Gleason, whose aunt in New Jersey passed away.

Prayers for the family of Rev. Ralph McCormack, among our last ties to the East Boston church.

Continued prayers for Desirée Lawson's step-daughter, Leta, who is still in the ICU (and will be for two more weeks) but is showing signs of improvement. Desirée and her family thank everyone for their prayers, love, and support.

Continued prayers for Virginia Coakley as she grieves the loss of her father.

Prayers for Jan Gough and her family as they plan and make arrangements to move to New Mexico.

Prayers for Priscilla Kelso, who left on March 12 to be in the Philippines for two months, and for Bart, who remains in the US.

Prayers for these local ministries: the Boston Faith & Justice transition as Rachel moves on; the NEPPG Campus Initiative; the Transitions ministry at Needham; the VBS outreach of Worcester.

Continued prayers for the pastoral search processes at: First Presbyterian Church of Waltham (co-pastor), Fort Square (interim), and Natick (pastor).

Prayers for all whose employment is affected by the budget cuts in churches, presbyteries, synods, and General Assembly.

Prayers of gratitude and praise as First Quincy celebrates its 125th anniversary.

Prayer Support for the Church in Tana, Madagascar

On Sunday, March 29th, churches in the region of Tana will be closed and their members will be gathering at one site for worship. The below prayer was sent in French to the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar, the Synod of the Northeast's international partner from the island country in the Indian Ocean offering our support and prayers. Please forward this to your congregations and ask them to be in solidarity and prayer with our partner in Madagascar.

Nancy J. Lomberk

“To our dear friends in Christ in the FJKM:

We, the members of the Synod of the Northeast of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), pray that Almighty God will hold you in the hollow of God’s hands and will grant you all the divine support, all the strength and all the courage you need to navigate through this turbulent moment which is destabilizing your national life. We believe that there is a bond that links us all together as brothers and sisters in Christ; we believe that this bond has no limit for in the Lord all the walls that divide us crumble away. Be assured of our love and prayers across the distances that separate us so that there may always be a heartfelt connection between us. May God bless you and keep you always in God’s love.”

Book Group

Friends:

Our next meeting will be Thursday, May 7, when we will finish *The Great Emergence*, by Phillis Tickle. So you can get a jump on things, our next book will be *The Triune God*, by William Placher. We’ll start discussing that book in June, with pages to be read to be announced. Please spread the word to other ministers in the presbytery who might be interested! Peace, Cindy Kohlmann

E-Connection Classifieds

Presbyterian Conservation Corps Summer 2009 Eco-Stewards Trainings for 18-24 year olds. 1) *Eco-Stewards West*: July 5-12, 2009, Highlands Camp in Colorado and Greenwood Farm in Montana / and 2) *Eco-Stewards Midwest*, August 2-9, 2009: Stronghold Retreat Center, IL and Lake View Presbyterian Church in Chicago, IL. To inquire or apply email Rob Mark robfirstpres@gmail.com or check www.presbyterianconservationcorps.org

This summer: Eco-Retreat / Family Vacation / or Place of Solitude to Write Your Dissertation or First Book - Escape to the Matheson Farm House, Cape Breton Nova Scotia. Help preserve 100 acres of ocean-front property while taking a wonderful retreat/ vacation. Special discounts for members of The Presbytery of Boston. Contact Rob Mark - robfirstpres@gmail.com - or see <http://www.homeaway.com/vacation-rental/p129034>

Upcoming Events

April 16-19 – *Spiritual Formation Retreat with Marjorie Thompson*, at Montreat.

April 19-23 – Arts & Sabbath, Montreat

April 20-23 – Associate Pastors’ Conference, Montreat

April 20-22 – “*Deep and Wide: Engaging the Church in Multicultural Outreach.*” A

conference at Stony Point sponsored by the Board of Pensions. For more information, contact Rev. Chris Foster (cjfoster@alumni.princeton.edu)

April 23-24 – *Presbyterian Writers' Conference* at Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, GA. For more information, contact Steve McCutchan at steve@smccutchan.com or Twila Belk at twilabelk@mchsi.com.

April 25 – NE PPG

May 1-4 – *Women's Healing Retreat, sponsored by the Synod of the Northeast*, at St. Joseph by the Sea, Mantoloking, NJ, \$375 (all inclusive). Scholarships are available. For further information, or to register, please contact: Kim Nodoro at Kimno@aol.com

May 2 – **Bicentennial Worship Celebration**, 3:00 p.m., **Old South Church, Boston. Celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Mass. Bible Society.**

May 3 – **Annual Walk for Hunger.** For more information, see www.projectbread.org/walk or call: 617-723-5000.

May 3-7 – *“Engaging the Other: Pentecost Spirit for a Changing World.”* Early Ministry Institute (EMI), Stony Point Conference Center.

May 16 – **“Engaging Conflict Well: The Spirit and Art of Conflict Transformation.”**

A workshop led by Rev. Tom Porter and Rev. Rodney Petersen. From 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at Newton Presbyterian Church. Sponsored by the NEPPG and The Presbytery of Boston. Contact David Dorer at NEPPGwork@gmail.com.

Presbytery Partnership Group. (Contact David Dorer for more information).

May 27-30 – Presbyterian Young Adult Ministry YAM Jam Conference, Austin Seminary. See PACHEM.org or register through the Collegiate Ministries Office.

YAM-Jam is limited to 125 participants and there is a goal of 50% leadership/participation by young adults

June 1-5 – Christian Education conference, Montreat

June 1-5 – *“Proclaiming the Text,”* Montreat.

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/))

July 4-7, 2009 – *2009 Christian Life Conference*, sponsored by Presbyterians for Renewal, at Montreat Conference Center: www.montreat.org.

July 11-15 – *“God Will Do Wonders Among You.”* Church-wide Gathering of Presbyterian Women, Louisville, KY. Register by May 15 to save \$50. For more information, visit www.pcusa.org/pwgathering.

July 14 - The PW Synod of the Northeast luncheon will be held on July 14. The cost is \$25.00 per person. Mail a check made out to PWSNE to Jane MacDonald before the Gathering. Her address is 36 Carriage Lane, Newton, NJ 07860-1927. She will send you a postcard which will be your ticket to the luncheon. You will not be able to purchase tickets in Louisville.

July 16-18 – *“In Good Company: Becoming Faithful Readers and Doers of Scripture.”* A missional church conference for pastors, judicatory leaders, and lay leaders, sponsored by the Center for Parish Development. For details: www.missionalchurch.org.

July 24-26 – *“Are Men from Mars and Women from Venus? A Biblical Response to Gender Difference.”* At St. Louis, MO. Sponsored by CBE International.

The Spiritual Journey Home From War: Ministering to Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans and their Families

A workshop for clergy, caregivers and families of
returning veterans



Wednesday, April 29th
from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
United Congregational Church of Worcester
6 Institute Road, Worcester, MA

What do veterans need from clergy and churches? Hear directly from the veterans and families themselves. If a veteran came to you in need of help with spiritual issues connected with war trauma or for other kinds of assistance, would you know where to go? This workshop will provide resources and insight invaluable to congregations ministering to veterans and their families.

Cost: \$25/person. Coordinated by the [Veterans Education Project](#) and the Brookfield Institute [The Brookfield Institute](#). For more information or to register, contact the Institute at 508-637-1215 or Brookfield.institute@gmail.com

Bicentennial Worship Celebration 200th Anniversary of the Massachusetts Bible Society

“In celebration of our 200th anniversary and in recognition of the ways in which the Body of Christ is again divided, we invite Christian churches of every stripe across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to come to one of our founding churches, Old South Church, 645 Boylston Street, Boston, MA, on Saturday, May 2 at 3:00 p.m.” To send your rsvp and for more information on the worship celebration and other bicentennial events, please contact the MBS at: admin@massbible.org or visit www.massbible.org.

One Great Hour of Sharing: “Together We Can Change the World”

“There are very few things you can do in a given week that will impact lasting change around the world. We encourage you to take time this week to **promote the offering** with congregations, groups, and individuals in your own circle of influence.

Moderator Bruce Reyes-Chow has put a challenge before our churches to **double their offering** this year in celebration of the 60th anniversary of the **One Great Hour of Sharing**, and because now more than ever those who are most vulnerable in our communities and around the world are counting on us to help them make a difference in their lives. Most congregations receive the One Great Hour of Sharing on Palm Sunday or Easter and use the season of Lent to promote the offering. So, please **take a moment now** to help ensure a successful offering this year. **Visit** the One Great Hour of Sharing Web site: <http://www.pcusa.org/oghs/>

Together we can change the world...”

James (Randy) Ackley
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