

**Presbytery of Boston**  
**E-Connection**  
**June 9, 2010**

## **What Commissioners and Delegates Do at General Assembly**

The Presbyterian Leader.com, Wednesday, May 26, 2010

By Sharon K. Youngs

By now, all 173 presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have elected their commissioners to the 219th General Assembly (2010). Those commissioners—712 in all—and 221 advisory delegates will make their way to Minneapolis to serve in their respective roles when the assembly meets July 3–10.

But their work as commissioners and advisory delegates will have begun long before the gavel sounds to convene the assembly. Let's imagine that Blossom Creek Presbytery has elected Helen as a commissioner and Peter as a young adult advisory delegate to this year's assembly.<sup>1</sup> Let's follow them as they fill their respective roles before, during, and after the assembly.

### **Before the Assembly**

The work that Helen and Peter will do during the time leading up to the General Assembly may be equally or more important than what they will do at the assembly.

One of their first activities will be orientation— a responsibility of Blossom Creek Presbytery. Some presbyteries will do this in a single meeting, others in a series of gatherings. Blossom Creek will join other presbyteries in its synod for an overnight event that, among other things, will introduce Helen and Peter to other commissioners and advisory delegates and build a sense of community among them.

The two will learn about such things as parliamentary procedure, what a General Assembly does, and the responsibilities of commissioners and advisory delegates. They will learn about Minneapolis and the daily schedule for this year's assembly. They will also take a look at the overtures coming before the highest governing body of the PC(USA). They will watch short orientation videos for commissioners and advisory delegates provided online by the Office of the General Assembly ([www.pcusa.org/ga219](http://www.pcusa.org/ga219)) to supplement the information from Blossom Creek.

Helen and Peter will spend the greatest amount of their preparation time reading the business items that have been submitted to the General Assembly for consideration (<http://pc-biz.org>). While they will read all of the overtures and reports, Helen will pay particular attention to the items for Committee 6 (Church Orders and Ministry), and Peter will focus on the items for Committee 3 (GA Procedures), which are the committees to which they have been randomly assigned by a computer.

## During the Assembly

Helen and Peter will arrive in Minneapolis in time to attend preassembly events, which include antiracism training and “Riverside Conversations”—opportunities for commissioners and advisory delegates to hear about and begin discussing among themselves some of the major items coming to the assembly.

The two will take their assigned seats in the plenary hall in time for the opening session of the General Assembly on Saturday afternoon, July 3, during which they will be commissioned for their work. That first evening they will cast their vote for the new GA Moderator. They will gather with others at the assembly and thousands of Presbyterians from the local area for opening worship the next day. And they will join everyone on an island in the Mississippi River for the Minneapolis Fourth of July fireworks display that evening.

Beginning Sunday afternoon and extending into the next two days, Helen and Peter will participate in their respective assembly committees, which are two of a total of nineteen committees. They will hear presentations on the business items they studied in advance, some of which may involve hearing from overture advocates and having designated times for open hearings. Their committees will reach decisions that will go to the full assembly for information or for action.

All of the committees will complete their work by Tuesday evening. The remainder of the week will be plenary days as the full assembly hears reports from each committee and acts on committees’ recommendations. Helen or Peter might feel moved to speak to the assembly about an item being considered. Like all of the other commissioners and advisory delegates, the two will listen carefully and prayerfully to the discussion, and Helen will cast her vote as she feels led by the Spirit.

Intermingled among the committee meetings and plenary sessions will be a variety of activities, many of which will take place at mealtimes—seminary gatherings, award presentations, gatherings of different constituencies from across the church and around the world, just to name a few.

If Helen and Peter are typical of former commissioners and advisory delegates, they will note that daily worship was a highlight of their assembly experience, as well as the opportunity to visit an exhibit hall filled with resources and displays of every kind. They will also mention the enrichment and inspiration from having met so many Presbyterians from across the country and truly feeling connected to the larger church.

## After the Assembly

Helen and Peter’s jobs are not finished once they return home. After they catch up on their sleep they will begin the critical work of sharing their experiences and interpreting the actions taken by the 219th General Assembly. Most likely they will be asked by Blossom Creek Presbytery to make a presentation at one of the stated meetings. Their home congregations will want to hear from them, as will other congregations in the area.

After it’s all over, Helen and Peter, along with the other commissioners and advisory delegates to this year’s General Assembly, will have discerned together the mind of Christ for the PC(USA).

And to that, we will say, “Well done, good and faithful servants” (Matt. 25:21, NIV).

## Endnote

1. The number of commissioners from a presbytery is determined by the number of members of the congregations within the presbytery (*Book of Order*, G-13.0102). Advisory delegates to the General Assembly encompass four categories: 173 Young Adult Advisory Delegates (one from each presbytery), twenty-five Theological Seminary Advisory Delegates, eight Missionary Advisory Delegates, and fifteen Ecumenical Advisory Delegates. These delegates serve alongside commissioners, with the distinction being that they have the privileges of voice and vote in their respective assembly committees, but voice only when the assembly meets in plenary to take final action on business.

### Keeping Up with the General Assembly

Whether or not you attend, you can keep up with the business and activities of the General Assembly by visiting [www.pcusa.org/ga219](http://www.pcusa.org/ga219), the official Web site for the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Check out the new **bible study** on the theme of the 219th General Assembly, "[Rivers of Living Water](#)." Author Matthew Skinner observes that if Presbyterians were to embrace the General Assembly as a kind of spiritual festival, then Jesus' words in John 7:37–38 might well raise our expectations accordingly. Important church business is accomplished at the General Assembly, but the context for this work is worship, celebration, remembrance, and hope for the future. This in-depth study gives readers a deeper understanding of the spirit of this year's assembly and encourages us to bring renewed expectations to the event, creating a more rewarding experience.

Remember that all **219th General Assembly (2010) materials** are FREE to all visitors of the site. All you have to do is **create a free account** and then download the desired material. We'll keep you posted as new resources are developed. These materials provide just a small sampling of the benefits you'll enjoy with a subscription to the Presbyterian Leader.com.

### [Stated Clerk issues statement on Gaza blockade incident](#)

**"We pray that the day for peace will come quickly"**

**by Presbyterian News Service**

**LOUISVILLE** —The Rev. Gradye Parsons, stated clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), has issued the following statement in the wake of the Israeli interception of a convoy of ships on its way to Gaza with humanitarian aid:

*The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a long history of ministry and presence with the people of the Middle East and has long advocated for a just and secure peace for Israelis*

*and Palestinians. Because of this, we express our deep concern about the events that occurred on May 31, 2010—the Israeli interception in international waters of a convoy of humanitarian-aid ships seeking to bring supplies to a population of 1.5 million people in Gaza.*

*A severe blockade of Gaza by Israel in response to the free election of Hamas representatives in 2006 and the military incursions of Operation Cast Lead in late 2008 and early 2009 have dramatically increased the already acute humanitarian need. We grieve the killing and injuring of participants in the humanitarian effort, as well as the injuring of members of the Israeli military forces that occurred when the Israeli forces stormed one of the ships and those on board resisted.*

*Our tradition, although not strictly pacifist, honors peaceful resistance, including nonviolent disobedience to unjust government policies and actions. We recognize that such initiatives as the flotillas to bring aid to the people of Gaza can be powerful instruments of such resistance. These actions sometimes incite violent responses, as in this case. The long-term success of this kind of resistance requires a nonviolent response on the part of the demonstrators, even when they are under attack.*

*We affirm the call of the United Nations Security Council for a prompt, impartial, credible, and transparent investigation of the May 31, 2010, events, in conformity with international standards. We ask President Obama and the United States Congress to support and ensure the fulfillment of this call.*

*We call for an end to the blockade of Gaza and urge the government of Israel to permit the immediate delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza.*

*We call on the Hamas government to work to end rocket attacks by all parties against Israel.*

*We call for the release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.*

*We call for the release of all ships and civilians held by Israel.*

*We call on the United States government to play an intensive and faithful role as a peacemaker—honoring international law, supporting UN efforts to end the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, and working for the day when Palestinians and Israelis alike know justice, peace, and security.*

*We pray for those killed and injured in the events of May 31, 2010, and for those who ordered and executed the interception. We pray for the people of Gaza, the West Bank, and Israel, as well as all nations and peoples impacted by these events. We pray that the day for peace will come swiftly.*

<http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2010/10459.htm>

# Immigration Summit

If you have questions or concerns about immigration issues, make sure you have our **June 19** NE PPG Immigration Summit on your calendar. Gary MacConnell, Mario DaSilva, and Young Ghil Lee have been active on our PoB Immigration Task Force. Gary notes: " I believe this conference will offer a great deal to increase understanding of the issue - particularly how we might get involved in an advocacy role as the government turns its attention to reform. If you are aware of others who can bring input or benefit from receiving information in your congregation, please invite them and encourage a group to attend from your church."

The flier promoting this special event was in your May Presbytery Packet, but it is also included as an attachment with your May 28 E-Connection as a convenient reminder. Also included as an attachment are notes from the event held in SNE last year, which provide helpful data and possibilities.

**Learn** the real facts about immigration reform legislation from keynote speaker **Julia Thorne**, PC(USA) Manager for Immigration Issues and Immigration Counsel.

**Meet** and talk with others, both long-standing and new immigrants, about challenges and solutions to immigration reform and other immigration issues.

**See** Tumaini Church, PSNE Kenyan new church development, in their own building with a beautiful new sanctuary and upstairs rooms, which was dedicated in November 2009.

**Experience** the hospitality of Tumaini, and the love and joy of working with your Presbyterian brothers and sisters from PC(USA) immigrant churches and fellowships in New England.

**June 19, 2010 9:30 am – 4 pm, Tumaini Church, 700 Main St., Springfield, MA**

Keynote Speaker: PC(USA) expert **Julia Thorne**

Worship, Plenary, Lunch, Workshops

Sponsored by the New England Presbytery Partnership Group (NEPPG)

A three-Presbytery event: Southern New England, Northern New England, Boston

\$10 donation, payable at the door; Please RSVP – let us know you're coming

**Contact** Joan Ramosjoanramos@verizon.net

## Prayer Concerns & Celebrations

### *Concerns:*

An excerpt from the pastoral letter by Presbytery of Boston Moderator Rev. Elliott Hipp, written in response to the violent deaths of Cory Johnson, 27, and Nicholas Fomby-Davis, 14, beloved members of the Roxbury Presbyterian Church community:

“As followers of Christ, our first and greatest calling is to pray fervently, and that is what I urge us all to do, Presbytery, churches, and individuals. Let us pray in thanksgiving for God’s gift of the lives of Cory and Nicholas. Let us pray for their families that God’s everlasting arms will hold them in these awful days. Let us pray for our brother Hurmon and his flock that they will find the strength to be the face of Christ to all who mourn. Let us pray for Roxbury, the City of

Boston, and God's beautiful world, for deliverance from the scourge of violence and hatred, from the pain of horizons so narrow that unspeakable acts become commonplace.”

Continued prayers for Naomi Northrop and her family as they mourn the loss of Naomi's six-year-old great-niece, who was killed in an accident.

Continued prayers for Betty Rots and her family; Betty's mother passed away in late May.

Continued prayers for the Kelsos and their family as they mourn the passing of Priscilla's mother in April.

Prayers for Alice Hageman for ongoing heart testing and treatments.

Prayers for Rick Underwood, who will be undergoing further surgery for skin cancer.  
Prayers for Gary MacConnell, who has persistent back pain.

Please remember Rev. David Muir in your prayers; he is in poor health.

Please continue to pray for Susan & Charlie Gleason's daughter, Rachel Monroe, and their family. Rachel came through her recent surgery with flying colors, but her recovery is still a delicate and lengthy process.

**Prayer for General Assembly**

“O blessed Trinity, in whom we know the Maker of all things seen and unseen, the Savior of all both near and far: By your Spirit enable us so to worship your divine majesty, that with all the company of heaven we may magnify your glorious name, saying: Holy, holy, holy. Glory to you, O Lord most high. Amen.” Book of Common Worship (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox press, 1993), 348.

***Celebrations:***

Kevin Hershey will be ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament on June 20 at the Presbyterian Church in Burlington. Kevin has received a call to Twelve Corners Presbyterian Church in Rochester, NY.

Prayers of gratitude and celebration for Terri Cisse, who earned a Master of Theology from Princeton, and Cavan Concannon, who received a Ph.D from Harvard.

Alice Hageman (Fourth, Parish Associate) will be an alternate PC(USA) delegate and Devin Berry (Clinton) will be a PC(USA) youth delegate at the Uniting General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches will take place in Grand Rapids, Michigan from June 18-26. The World Communion succeeds the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC.) The Uniting General Council theme is “Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace,” with significant emphasis on the connection between communion

and justice. Covenanting for justice in the economy and the earth will receive significant attention.

## **Churches in Transition**

### ***Presbytery of Boston:***

The United Presbyterian Church at Whitinsville is seeking transitional pastoral leadership.

The Taiwan Presbyterian Church of Greater Boston is seeking transitional pastoral leadership.

Fort Square Presbyterian Church is seeking an installed pastor.

### ***Presbytery of Southern New England:***

Brookfield: Valley

Rev. Ann Beams has announced her retirement effective this coming October. Brookfield will be searching for an interim pastor; PIFs may be sent to Dana Lindsley.

Cumberland: Calvin

Searching for an interim; PIFs may be sent to Dana Lindsley. Rev. Glenn Ramsey will serve as temporary interim pastor.

Fall River: United

Searching for interims; PIFs may be sent to Dana Lindsley.

## **Presbytery of Boston Classifieds**

### **Lifeguard Needed!**

Camp Wilmot [www.campwilmot.org](http://www.campwilmot.org) is looking for a certified lifeguard for the month of July. Possible extra work with auxiliary groups renting camp in August. Salary is negotiable, and can include free camp experience for kids/families!

Please email Rachel Allen at [rachel1248@aol.com](mailto:rachel1248@aol.com) or Rebecca Sommer-Petersen at [rpetersen@newtonpres.org](mailto:rpetersen@newtonpres.org) if interested. Must be at least 18 years old and have completed a Red Cross Life Saving course of study, and hold current certification.

### **Part time Youth Director**

The Church of the Covenant is looking for a part-time Youth Director. For more information, contact Brad Day, of the Personnel Committee, at: 617-522-1999 / 617-943-4229 or <mailto:bradleyday@comcast.net>. Details are also posted on the Presbytery of Boston website under "About Us/Employment Opportunities.

**Camp Wilmot, our PCUSA camp in New Hampshire, has a great summer of faith and fun planned.**

**Check out the schedule at [www.campwilmot.org](http://www.campwilmot.org)**

## **Church Unbound**

I invite you to consider spending a few days in August at **Montreat Conference Center**, along with others -- a diverse group that seeks consciously to overcome the usual barriers that tend to divide us -- exploring **Church Unbound**:

If we believe God yearns to turn the church loose to be a Gospel force in the world, how can we partner in what God is doing? Differences – of culture and color, gender and generation, political perspective and theology – are gifts to be explored and celebrated as we live into a *Church Unbound*.

**Church Unbound** will take place **August 11-14, 2010**. We will be challenged by these leaders:

- Keynote speaker, preacher, and workshop leader **Brian McLaren**
- Bible study leader **Eugene Eung-Chun Park**
- Worship and music team **Harry Pickens, Liz Kaznak** and **Jud Hendrix** (Jud, Liz and Harry led the planning of the moving worship at the first Church Unbound conference in 2008; if you attended, you know how fantastic those services were. Conferees will have the opportunity to choose their practicum, participate in shaping the worship experiences for this conference, and gather ideas to take home.)
- Preachers and workshop leaders **Margaret Aymer, Nelson Johnson, and Carol Howard Merritt**
- Workshop leaders **Cassandra Dahnke and Tomas Spath, John Franke, Jack Haberer, Dieter Heinzl, Jin Kim, Jim Kitchens, Sara Pottschmidt Lisherness, and Tom Priest.**

I am honored to be on the Planning Team for **Church Unbound**, which is co-sponsored by the *Presbyterian Outlook*, the Cross-Cultural Alliance of Ministries, and Montreat. We think we have lined up a stellar group of folks to lead us in experiencing and reflecting on a **Church Unbound**, moving joyfully and faithfully into God's future -- but the key to the success of a conference is the whole community of participants. Here's hoping you will be a part of it! And invite your friends, your congregation, someone in your presbytery you need to know better...

Blessings, *Tricia*

**Tricia Dykers Koenig, Covenant Network National Organizer**  
phone 216-658-1770; [www.covnetpres.org](http://www.covnetpres.org)

**\*Note: Pastor Liz Leavitt of First Waltham will be attending, and scholarships are still available from CS&D.**

## Events

**Please note: If you know of upcoming events that would be of interest to members of the Presbytery of Boston, please send your information to: [presbyteryofboston@verizon.net](mailto:presbyteryofboston@verizon.net)**

*June 10* – Conference on youth violence, co-sponsored by the Boston Theological Institute and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary's Boston campus, the Center for Urban Ministerial Education (CUME). The program will be from 10:00 am to 4:30 pm at 90 Warren Street, Roxbury. Please call 617-427-7293 for further information.

*June 18 – 28* – *Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*. Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Please contact Wayne Parrish ([wayneparrish@comcast.net](mailto:wayneparrish@comcast.net)) if you are interested in attending. **\*Note\* - CS&D scholarships are available.**

*June 19* – *Immigration Summit*, sponsored by the NEPPG and the Presbyteries of Northern and Southern New England and Boston. At the Tumaini Church, 700 Main St., **Springfield, MA**, 9:30 am – 4:00 pm. Plenary speaker, Julia Thorne, PC(USA) Manager for Immigration Issues and Immigration Counsel. &10 donation, payable at the door. Send your rsvp to: [joanramos@verizon.net](mailto:joanramos@verizon.net)

*June 20 – 23* – *John Bell* at Andover-Newton Theological Seminary, **Newton**. See [www.ants.org](http://www.ants.org). The theme is “God Surprising.” There will be an evening gathering of singing and music open to the public on Sunday, June 20.

*July 1-4* – “*Gather at the Well*” *Collegiate Ministry Summit '10*, Minneapolis, MN (directly preceding GA). For more information see: [www.pachem.org/Summit10Conference](http://www.pachem.org/Summit10Conference). **Information on opportunities for grants will be available soon from the Committee on Education for Mission.**

*August 11-14* – “*Church Unbound*,” Montreat Conference Center, NC. Keynote speaker, preacher, and workshop leader **Brian McLaren**. See [www.covnetpres.org](http://www.covnetpres.org) or [www.montreat.org](http://www.montreat.org). More information is also provided on page 8 of this newsletter.