

Presbytery of Boston
E-Connection
September 16, 2009

Home improvement

A monthly column for the church-at-large by the Reverend Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

September 2009

The default television channel at our house is HGTV. It is a channel that focuses primarily on home improvement or home replacement.

The home improvements that are featured range from a new paint job and throw pillows to major renovations. Given that the improvements generally follow a life change of the home owner, the work is usually centered on a hope that new space will mean a new way of living.

This month, the proposed new Form of Government will be available for discussion across the church. To me, this work is like a home improvement project, not home replacement.

The basic structure of our Presbyterian life together – the foundation and load-bearing walls – is all there in the proposal. What is new is the remodeled space to allow the church to move into a new life together.

Why is improvement needed? The current Form of Government is over 25 years old. The world in which it was created is so different from today's world in which we minister. Multicultural understandings, personal computers – digital everything – and the all-encompassing Web have created a very different context for ministry.

So, we need to renovate our polity space. We need to knock down some walls of regulation and build room to allow newness to happen. That newness could bring some new ways of living together and some new visions for our future.

The HGTV home improvement shows usually have three parts. First comes the sharing of vision between home owner and designer. Second, the home owner's anxiety surfaces about the changes. Finally, the project is completed.

The Form of Government revision process has had similar stages. Perhaps we are nearing the final phase. I hope you will take the time to look over the proposal carefully.

Henry Ward Beecher said, "Every tomorrow has two handles. We can take hold of it with the handle of anxiety or the handle of faith."

Let's approach this renovation with the handle of faith.

What are you looking forward to?

A monthly column for the church-at-large by The Reverend Bruce Reyes-Chow, Moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) This month, the column is written by the Reverend Dr. Byron A. Wade, Vice-Moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2008).

September 2009

As summer turns into fall, people are looking forward to new things.

Take my son Andrew, who started second grade a few days ago. He had a great summer camp experience, but was so ready to go back to school. His eagerness was driving my wife and me crazy! He talked about meeting his teacher, seeing his classmates, buying school supplies, and more. When I dropped him off at school, he was definitely ready for the change.

The church is also looking forward to new things. Many Christian educators are working hard at preparing for rally day events. Pastors and program staff are restarting existing church programs or creating new ones. Talk of stewardship and church budgets begins to be heard. Parishioners are returning from summer vacations and seeking the support and comfort of the community of faith as they begin the cycle of work routines, family schedules, and various tasks.

Through all of these things we hope and pray for something new to happen, whether it is increased attendance in worship and educational programs, mission projects, or a renewed emphasis on faith and discipleship.

In my travels as Vice-Moderator, I have seen Presbyterians looking forward to the new things that God is and will be doing. Whether it is spending time with young adult volunteers who have answered God's call to mission, or churches that are embarking on service and renewal projects in their communities, or sitting around the table with colleagues at governing body meetings, there is fresh hope that God is calling us in the everyday to experience God's leading in a new direction to serve people in this day and age.

What are you looking forward to? It is my hope and prayer that you will remember the words of the prophet Isaiah, "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:19).

Reforming Our Health Care System Cannot Wait

Dear Colleagues in Ministry:

The church has an opportunity to make a difference in the healthcare debate, to encourage legislators to work towards creating a bill successfully that will provide 1) continued security to those who currently have healthcare coverage in an era when costs have been escalating, and 2) healthcare coverage to the nearly fifty million Americans who have no coverage and are at risk of being pushed into, or held in, poverty because of illness.

Attached please find a bulletin insert* which we make available for your use in any way you see fit. Additionally, we have posted this insert on the synod web page so that it can be accessed directly by pastors and other church leaders who care to use it with their printed Sunday worship materials.

While the Presbyterian Church (USA) has gone on record in favor of a single-payer system, and the insert honors that decision and the actions of Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons in sharing the PC(USA) perspective with the US Congress, the attached insert also supports proposals such as the President's which, while introducing an option of public coverage, builds on the current insurance system rather than starting from scratch with a single-payer system, all in the interest of preserving quality healthcare for those who have it, and providing quality healthcare for those who do not.

Clint McCoy, Executive for Partnerships
Synod of the Northeast, PC(USA); cmccoy@synone.org

** Please contact the Presbytery of Boston office for a copy of the bulletin insert.*

Taking A Coaching Approach to Ministry

Living Into the New Church, funded by two Presbytery Partnership Groups and a MGB grant from the Board of Pensions, had its first component in April in the conference, "Deep and Wide: Engaging the Church in Multicultural Outreach."

The second component, that began focused on emergent issues, morphed into a training program of pastors to learn coaching skills. This second component, entitled "Taking A Coaching Approach to Ministry," has now been launched and consists of both online and residential events leading toward certification. The online course is in place and ready to be accessed. The first residential event is in October at Holmes and registrations are being received. Given the grant money available the cost is extremely low for a very valuable certification.

The best information is at this link:
<http://www.presbyteriancenter.org/LivingintotheNewChurchcoaching.html>

Thanks! Dana
The Rev. Dana F. Lindsley, Executive Presbyter, The Presbytery of Southern New England

Climate Convocation with Bill McKibben

In anticipation of the October 24th International Day of Climate Action (<http://www.350.org/>), writer and environmentalist Bill McKibben will offer his penetrating insights on global and local efforts for climate justice and the individual, institutional, and political change the crisis demands. People of faith and people of conscience, educators and community leaders, scientists and students will meet on Sunday, October 18, 2:00, at Memorial Church, Harvard University to hear a common call to action. Together we can make it clear that the world needs an international plan that meets the latest science and safeguards our irreplaceable earth for future generations. A downloadable poster in pdf format for this event will be available at <http://www.macucc.org/president/ClimateConvocation.htm>.

“Climate Change, Health Consequences, and Healthy Solutions”

Dr. Paul Epstein, Associate Director of the Center for Health and the Global Environment at the Harvard Medical School, will offer an authoritative medical perspective on climate change and public health on *Thursday, September 17, 7-9pm, at First Parish of Concord, 20 Lexington Street, Concord*. This program is presented by ConcordCAN. Contact Bob Andrews (978-369-2876) for more information.

Presbyterian Peacemaking Program

September 2, 2009

Dear Colleague in Ministry,

May the peace of Christ be with you! The generous gifts and faithful witness of Presbyterians through the years have supported ministries of peace and justice at all levels of the church. As a result, seeking peace and the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program have become essential parts of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s ongoing mission. We give thanks for your role in this faithful witness.

On October 4, many congregations will celebrate World Communion Sunday and receive the Peacemaking Offering. The Peacemaking Offering presents an opportunity to raise awareness of the peacemaking emphasis of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and provides financial support for peacemaking ministries in congregations, presbyteries, and synods and on the national level.

The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program recently mailed several additional resources to help promote the offering to the chairperson of the committee with responsibility for peacemaking in each of the presbyteries. The resources included a DVD containing the promotional video that was recently sent via email. If you would like to receive any of the other resources named in the

letter, please let us know. [Contact Nancy Goodhue at (888) 728-7228, x5182 or Denise Dukes at (888) 728-7228, x5026 if you have questions, or go to: www.pcusa.org/peacemaking

The staff of the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program gives thanks for your support of peacemaking in the presbytery and congregations you serve and throughout God's world.

In Christ, The Rev. W. Mark Koenig

Coordinator, Presbyterian Peacemaking Program; Compassion, Peace and Justice Ministry; General Assembly Mission Council)

“Nor’E-News”

The September 2009 edition of the Synod's Nor'E-News can be downloaded from the Synod's website at <http://www.synodne.org/mediagallery/album.php?aid=38&page=1>. This is a one page (front and back) communication instrument we hope you'll use to share information about the Synod's life and mission throughout your presbytery. The newsletter contains the following articles:

- ✠ Madagascar Update: Rasendrasahinas Returns Home to Lead Church in a Troubled Land
- ✠ Presbytery of New York City Honored for Mission Giving by the Presbyterian Church (USA)
- ✠ “Hope in Hard Times” ~ 33rd Annual Racial Ethnic Convocation
- ✠ Equipping the Congregation for Outreach & Mission
- ✠ Who Do We Need to Become in Order to Welcome the Stranger?
- ✠ Presbyterians Minister Together in Western New York Presbytery Following August Flooding

2010 Mission Yearbook

If you or your congregation would like to bulk order copies of the 2010 Mission Yearbook for Prayer and Study, please contact the PoB office at: presbyteryofboston@verizon.net or 978-365-5200. If we get enough orders to get the bulk rate, individual copies will be \$10; 2 - 9 will be \$8 each; 10+ will be \$7 each. We need your order as soon as possible to determine whether we qualify for the bulk order. ***The deadline is October 15***, and if we get enough orders, you will be notified to bring your check to the November 16 Presbytery meeting to pick up your yearbooks.

Prayer Concerns & Celebrations

Continued prayers for Bob Ferguson, John Kepler, Gino Maini, Elder David Park, and Don Wick.

October Is Pastor Appreciation Month!

So many pastors serve the church with so much energy, intelligence, imagination, and love, it stands to reason that churches would want to say "thanks" to them and to their families in tangible ways. October is Pastor Appreciation Month. We'd like to encourage you to show your appreciation.

HERE'S THE DEAL! Send us a note or email to the office, or fill out an appreciation note at the September 28th Presbytery meeting. In your personal expression of appreciation for your pastor, be sure to include their name, the church, and your name. Keep these brief and focused. For example: Hawkins Memorial Presbyterian Church expresses appreciation for dedicated service by Pastor George Whipple and his family, wife Janice, and children: Lauren, John, and Will.

Pastors will be recognized at the November Presbytery meeting. One of the pastors receiving notes of appreciation will be selected via a random drawing to receive a special gift. Send in as many expressions of appreciation as you want, though it will not effect the odds of the drawing.

***Please Respond!* The Presbytery Office Needs Your Contact Information**

With several upcoming opportunities for stewardship, triennium, and missions, it would be helpful to have full contact information for the individuals in each congregation who are responsible for the following areas of ministry:

Youth Pastor
Christian Education
Mission
Treasurer
Stewardship
Evangelism

Please have the church office or clerk of session forward as much of the following information as possible to our office: presbyteryofboston@verizon.net. Thank you in advance for your help.

Presbytery of Boston Meetings

OCTOBER

- 1 – COM, 7:00
- 6 – Nominating, 11:00
- 8 – CS&D, 7:30
- 16-17 – Synod
- 16 – CEM, 2:00
- 19 – S&B, 7:00
- 20 – ICL, 3:30
- 21 – Trustees, Noon
- 22 – Council, 7:00

Celebrate Mission This October

“Hundreds of Presbyterians passionate about mission will gather in Cincinnati October 22-24 for the World Mission Celebration '09. Meeting under the theme "Branches of the Same Vine," the conference will seek to connect Presbyterians with others who have similar mission interests, enable mission learning through presentations and mutual sharing among attendees, and send participants forth to embrace their calling to mission service and support, says Lis Valle, Presbyterian World Mission's associate for equipping the church for mission involvement. Online registration for the event is available.

Like the John 15 passage on which its theme is based, the conference will center on a common life and mission in Christ, says planning team chair Don Dawson, director of the World Mission Initiative at Pittsburgh Seminary and the New Wilmington Mission Conference. "It's coming together around the One who gives us life and power and enables us to bear fruit. There is diversity, there are many branches, but those branches are powerless without Jesus."

Each of five plenary sessions will focus on Presbyterian mission in a different region of the world. The topics include health and development in Africa; primary, secondary and higher education in Asia; evangelism and theological education in the Americas; partnership in evangelism in Europe; and advocacy and interfaith dialogue in the Middle East. In addition, about 35 workshops will be offered.

The event's leadoff speaker will be Hunter Farrell, director of Presbyterian World Mission, who will speak on "Going Deeper: The Power of Presbyterian Mission in Jesus' Way." Other presenters will include mission personnel, global mission partners, World Mission staff, and mission initiators from congregations. Many of the mission workers who will be itinerating in the World Mission Challenge, in September and October will be participating in the Celebration, some leading workshops and/or plenary sessions. Mary Mikhail, president of the Near East School of Theology in Beirut, Lebanon, will preach during the closing worship service.

Several mission groups will meet in Cincinnati in conjunction with the Celebration. They include about 20 mission networks, the Association of Presbyterian Mission Pastors, a newly formed Young Adult Volunteer alumni group, the continuation committee from the Dallas mission consultation, and a group of presbytery executives who want to work more closely with World Mission. The Celebration's registration fee, which includes six meals, is \$225 prior to Sept. 15 (after Sept. 15 the fee will be \$275)." Register online or call (800) 728-7228, x5729.

E-Connection Classifieds

Good Shepherd in Easton and Hartford Street in Natick are actively seeking installed pastors.

Events Calendar

Sept. 17 – *Climate Change & Public Health*, by Dr. Paul Epstein of Harvard Medical School. From 7-9 pm at First Parish, **Concord**, MA.

Sept. 19 – *"Strengthening Congregations, Growing Mission Deep and Wide, and Enriching Our Faith: A Return to Stewardship Fundamentals."* A workshop sponsored by the Stewardship & Budget Committee. 9 am to 2 pm at **Newton PC**. Contact Bob Stephens no later than Sept. 16: rassaa@aol.com or 617-264-7445.

Gospel Fest 2009, 7 pm at Fourth Church in **Hyde Park**. Free food and raffle with great prizes! Suggested donation is \$10, with proceeds going to the church's tutoring program.

Sept. 24 – Theology Reading Group--Our next gathering to discuss William C. Placher's *The Triune God* at 10 am at the **Needham Church**. We will be looking at the third chapter, and choosing our next book! Contact Cindy Kohlmann at ckohlmann@mac.com

Sept. 25 - *The Sky family Celtic Concert- An Evening of Celtic Christian music and Dance*. This family is from P.E.I. Concert to take place on Friday, Sept. 25, 7 pm at Fort Square in **Quincy**. Tickets are \$12/adults, \$10/seniors, \$8/children, \$40/family. Tickets may be reserved or purchased from the office by calling 617-471-6806

October 1-2 – *"Scandal of the Evangelical Mind,"* Fifteen-year anniversary of the publication of the book by Mark Noll, at **Gordon College**. Call: 978-867-4752 or visit www.gordon.edu.

Oct. 18 – *Climate Convocation with Bill McKibben*, at Memorial Church, **Harvard University**, at 2:00 pm.

"One Book, Many Voices," with Liz Walker. Sponsored by the Massachusetts Bible Society, at Wilson Chapel, ANTS, **Newton Centre**. 7-9 pm with reception to follow. Also on October 19-22 at other locations in MA. Contact the MBS for more information: admin@massbible.org or 617-969-9404.

Oct. 22-24 – *"World Mission Celebration '09"* Cincinnati, OH. Register online or call (800) 728-7228, x5729. Early registration discount through Sept. 15.

CANCELLED: *"Words That Matter: A Poetry & Liturgy Workshop with Poet Ann Weems,"* Evensong Retreat Center, **Harwich Port**, Cape Cod. For further information, call 508-432-0027 or go to www.evensongretreat.com