

Presbytery of Boston

E-Connection

September 21, 2011

Harmony - The Blessedness of Unity

The Monthly Column of General Assembly Stated Clerk Grady Parsons

¹ How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!

² It is like the precious oil on the head, running down upon the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down over the collar of his robes.

³ It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion. For there the LORD ordained his blessing, life for evermore. (*Psalms 133*)

Gillian Welch and Dave Rawlings are on a concert tour these days in conjunction with Welch's new CD. In a recent interview with Welch, the reporter noted the challenge of distinguishing between their voices in a couple of songs because of the fine harmony. She replied that the two of them had been singing together for so long, they have trouble with that, as well.

While the Psalmist paints a glorious image of harmony, other passages indicate more discord. It appears that fine harmony was lacking throughout the reign of King David. It is also difficult to imagine the disciples singing in harmony after their who-is-the-greatest squabble. In Acts 2, we see a fleeting glimpse of harmony in the early church that is soon interrupted by the Hellenists complaining of unfair treatment of their widows. The epistles are filled with one unharmonious church after another.

Singing in harmony requires balancing a dissonant chord (a chord with tension) with a consonant one (a relaxed chord). Thus, harmony happens when a balance is struck between "tense" and "relaxed" chords.

The challenge for us in the church is how to balance tense and relaxed moments. For example, congregations are gearing up for a new church school year. How do we balance the tension of having enough children for a class with the joy of watching a 7-year-old begin the discovery of God? Stewardship season will soon be upon us, as well. How will we balance the tension of having enough pledges to cover the budget with the free gift of a 90-year-old member's volunteer hours?

How? Historically, we have had to rely on grace. And in that we have harmony.

October Is Pastor Appreciation Month!

So many pastors serve the church with so much energy, intelligence, imagination, and love that 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 a note or an email to the presbytery office. In your personal expression of appreciation for your pastor, be sure to include their name, the church, and your name. Please keep these brief and focused.

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 affect the odds of the drawing.

Send your notes of pastor appreciation by email to: presbyteryofboston@verizon.net (with "pastor appreciation" in the subject line), or by USPS to:

The Presbytery of Boston
169A Chestnut Street
Clinton, MA 01510

Please write "pastor appreciation" on the lower-left corner of the envelope.

Presbytery Meetings

SEPTEMBER

26 – Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Boston, 7:00 p.m., Waltham. Plan to arrive early to attend the pre-presbytery meeting with the Boston Faith & Justice Network, 6:00.

OCTOBER

4 – Nominating, 11:30, NPC
5 – CPM, 6:00, NPC
6 – COM, 7:00, NPC
13 – S&B, 7:00, NPC
19 – CEM, 1:30, NPC
20 – CCS&D, 7:30, Waltham
27 – Council, 7:00, NPC

Pre-Presbytery Meeting: Boston Faith & Justice Network

Come early [at 6:00 p.m.] to the September Boston Presbytery meeting & learn more about how Christians in Boston are leading the way in following Jesus with their money.

Through commerce, transportation and media, people around the world are more connected than ever before. There are countless ways to express God's love in a world in which distance no longer determines who is your neighbor. At the same time, over-consumption and unjust consumption are emptying bank accounts, exhausting the world's dearest resources, and fueling the exploitation of the most vulnerable. Deep shifts in lifestyle, community design, and public policy are needed to meet these challenges.

Join the Boston Faith & Justice Network's Ryan Scott McDonnell in a conversation about how Christians are leading an ecumenical movement in the greater Boston area to follow Jesus with our money. The Boston Faith & Justice Network is a community of Christians seeking justice through personal, community, and policy change. Learn more about what we do at www.bostonfaithjustice.org

Prayer Concerns & Celebrations

The entire Presbytery of Boston joins with our sisters and brothers in the Roxbury Presbyterian Church in mourning the death of Justin Albert. Justin, 22, was stabbed to death early [last] Wednesday in another random and senseless act of violence on the streets of Boston. Our prayers are particularly raised for Justin's grandparents, Perry and Jeannette Boone Smith, who are so well known to us through their contributions to the life of the Presbytery and Synod over the course of many years, and for Justin's two brothers. And we renew the solidarity of prayers with the Roxbury congregation and the urban Boston community, for nothing "in all creation...will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Continued prayers for Linda Benson, the church secretary at Burlington, whose mother, Mary Hetman, died on September 7.

Please keep the MacDonald family in your prayers as they mourn the recent loss of Rod's father.

Continued prayers for Pilgrim Church as they seek the finances to replace their boiler and the right person to install it.

Ken Dewar is feeling better but still suffers pain from shingles; please keep him in your prayers.

Prayers for Wayne Parrish, as he prepares to return from his sabbatical officially on October 3.

****Note:** If you would like to share your prayer requests with the Presbytery of Boston, please contact us at presbyteryofboston@verizon.net. We continue to pray for the ongoing needs of those whose concerns are not listed.

Events

***Note: If you know of an event that would be of interest to the Presbytery of Boston members, please send your information to: presbyteryofboston@verizon.net.**

September 21 – Refugee Immigration Ministry Third Annual International Concert, at First Church, 11 Garden Street, **Cambridge**. From 6:30 to 9:00. Purchase tickets online at: <http://rimconcert2011.eventbrite.com/>

September 24 – “God Will Hear Your Prayer” Hyde Park Presbyterian Church Gospel Fest on Saturday evening, September 24, at 7:00pm. 1109 River Street, **Hyde Park**, MA. An evening of praise and prayer in song. Multiple choirs, soloists, great congregational singing, food and fellowship. Suggested donation: \$10 (children under 12 free). All proceeds go to support our after-school tutoring program. For more information or to order tickets call Rev. Beth Wieman: 617 361 0051. Tickets are also available at the door.

September 24 - Lake Sunapee Cruise to Celebrate Camp Wilmot's Birthday – 2:00 p.m. \$18 per person. Meet cruise-goers at Lake Sunapee Harbor at 1:00 PM. Cruise boards at 1:30 PM
**Following the cruise, the group will go out to dinner at one of the area's great restaurants. There is also an option to stay at the best retreat center in the Lake Sunapee region... Camp Wilmot! \$20 for adults, \$15 for children twelve years old and under. For more information, contact Rob Heinze at ubuggs@comcast.net We hope to see you there!

September 27 – “Turn-Around Strategies for Your Church, Part I: Overcoming Invisibility”. A 90-minute Presbyterian Outlook Webinar, featuring Tom Ehrich. At 2:00 EDT. Questions? Contact Jana Blazek at 800-446-6008 x 758 or jblazek@pres-outlook.org

September 28 – “Building on the Dream Together.” Roxbury Presbyterian Church celebrates its 125th anniversary. 328 Warren Street, **Roxbury**, MA.

September 30 – “Teaching the new Form of Government in Officer Education.” Montreat Conference Center. For details, including the day's schedule, and to register online for this timely and important seminar, go to www.montreat.org/544.

October 2 – Fourth Presbyterian Church celebrates its refurbished sanctuary with a Jubilee Service. “We will have Jubilee trumpets like usual, and maybe even some Jubilee trombones and French horns! We’ll also have another great potluck lunch and a Jubilee reminder that in the forgiveness we know in Christ, we can thrive and shine in our witness to God’s Love.” 340 Dorchester Street, **South Boston**. See: <http://www.4thboston.org/>

October 11-14 – Joint conference of the Association of Retired Ministers, Their Spouses or Survivors (ARMSS), and the Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network (POAMN). The ARMSS/POAMN Joint Conference will be held in San Antonio Texas, October 11-14. For more information, contact: Ginny Nyhuis at gnyhuis@frontier.com

October 12 – Clergywomen Gathering in the Presbytery of Southern New England.

Clergywomen are having a discussion on October 12 in Providence, RI, which will be led by Rev. Dr. Nancy Young, the Coordinator for Women's Leadership Development for the PC(USA) on Wednesday, October 12, 2011, from 1pm-4pm in **Providence, Rhode Island**. She is working on a process called Deborah's Daughters, which is designed to provide opportunities for women leaders in the PC(USA) to have conversations about their calls, what their joys and challenges are, and how her office can follow through with nurture and support. **All clergywomen from the Boston Presbytery are invited to join the discussion.** Please contact Tracy Mehr-Muska if you are interested in attending. Tracy can be reached at tmehrmuska@yahoo.com or 860-586-8880.

*October 25 – MCC Annual Dinner, 6:00 p.m. at Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church, 145 Brattle Street **Cambridge**, MA 02138.* The Annual Dinner will be an occasion to honor interfaith leaders from the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Faith Communities. This interfaith occasion will be one in which the Council will launch an **Annual Colloquium on Interfaith Understanding**. This colloquium is designed to underscore the Council's commitment to enhance interfaith respect and understanding through education, conversation and relationship building in collaboration with people and institutions of other faiths. We are honored to have **Dr. Diana Eck**, Professor of Comparative Religion and Indian Studies and **Frederic Wertham**, Professor of Law and Psychiatry in Society at Harvard University, Executive Director of the Pluralism Project and chair of the Interfaith Relations Commission of the National Council of Churches as our inaugural keynote speaker. This evening will also be an evening to honor the leadership of our Executive Director, the **Reverend Jack Johnson**, who will be retiring at the end of October. Tickets are available at the Council website: www.masscouncilofchurches.org

October 29 – “A Beacon of Light”. Presbyterian Women in the Synod of the Northeast Leadership Enhancement Workshop. 9:30 to 3:30 at Stony Point Conference Center. All women are invited. The registration form and information is found in the August issue of “The Lighthouse,” which will be included in the September Presbytery Meeting packet and is also posted on our website: www.presbyteryofboston.org under “Newsletters”.

November 4-6 - Annual Conference of the Association of Presbyterian Tentmakers, Stony Point NY. For more information see: www.stonypointcenter.org.

November 11 – “Re-ignited: Kindling Our Inner Fire for God”. Featuring Steve Macchia and Christ Webb. From 9 am to 3 pm, Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, **S. Hamilton, MA**. Presented by Leadership Transformations in partnership with the Ockenga Institute and the Pierce Center for Disciple Building. Visit www.reignited.eventbrite.com for more information and registration.

November 17-20 – Moderator's Conference, Louisville, KY. Contact Angela Lucear: angela.lucear@pcusa.org

November 18-19 – Church for All Generations: 35th Racial-Ethnic Convocation, Stony Point Conference Center, Stony Point, NY. For more information, contact Nancy Lomberk at the Synod Office: 315-446-5990/800-585-5881.