



THE NEWS

Dec.
2011

OF SAN FERNANDO PRESBYTERY

NEWS

THOMSON INSTALLED AS MODERATOR AT NOVEMBER MEETING

Woodland Hills Presbyterian Church hosted the final Presbytery meeting of 2011, which turned out to be both a productive and a punctual gathering. In spite of a full docket, commissioners wrapped up the business portion of the meeting in about two hours, adjourning just before 9:00 pm.

Rev. Bob Thomson was installed as 2012 Moderator during the worship service. Worship also included the lighting of an Advent candle, and 2011 Moderator Areta Crowell delivered a message entitled United in Christ, Standing Firm on the Rock.

Elders Nabeel Saoud and Bert Schmid of the Property & Finance Committee reported on the budget outlook for the coming year. The Presbytery faces a significant shortfall in 2012, which will lead to a reevaluation of mission priorities and cutbacks in staff. Elder Ralph Vick and Rev. Curtis Webster, who have been involved in discussions about reconfiguring the Presbytery Office staff, explained that Business Administrator Pat Johanson will retire next year, and at this point a replacement is not being sought.

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Commissioners voted to receive Rev. Teresa Ramsey-McNeil from the United Church of Canada. Deidra Goulding, of the Shadow Hills church, was accepted as an Inquirer, and Sharon Barker, from La Canada, was advanced to Candidacy.

The Council reported that they have voted to increase the number of yearly Presbytery Meetings to five. All meetings will be held from 5:30 to 8:30 pm. The dates are as follows: Tuesday, February 28, at Kirk o' the Valley; Tuesday, April 24, at St. James; Tuesday, June 26 (**host church needed**); Tuesday, September 25 (**host church needed**); Tuesday, November 27 (**host church needed**).

Note that no location has been set for the last three gatherings. Please consider having your church act as host for one of these meetings.



Rev. Bob Thomson,
2012 Moderator

A petition from the floor to regarding ordinations standards for the Presbytery of San Fernando was presented for first reading, and will be acted upon at the February Presbytery meeting.

CALLED AND SENT

Rev. Sarah Henken was ordained by San Fernando Presbytery in 2010, and has since been working in South America under the auspices of Presbyterian World Mission. This month she reports on a conference she attended regarding women's participation in Latin American churches.

"We shouldn't be stepping on each other's skirts."

"We need to help and encourage one another in using our God-given gifts."

These statements sparked lively conversation at an ecumenical panel on "Rethinking our [women's] participation in the church." Women's leadership in the church is relatively new here in Bolivia, and continues to face significant obstacles and resistance. I was privileged to sit alongside Bolivian women who are leaders in Pentecostal, Lutheran, and Methodist churches, and share our hopes and struggles together.

That panel filled me with energy and hopefulness. Something that Pastora Yolanda said really spoke to me: "We hear a lot about what I [as a woman in the church] *can't* do. But what *can* I do?"

All who were present shared stories of faithful service and struggle, and it was deeply moving and energizing to be in that space together with other women who are passionate about their

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participation in the church. The invitation to participate provided an opportunity for me to reflect on my own experience as a woman in the church, what I have seen and learned in the church in different places. I came away with a new sense of the importance of sharing space together, and having role models.

As a child, I grew up in a lovely Presbyterian congregation that nurtured and molded and encouraged me in the faith. But I didn't know any women pastors, and I didn't fully realize they existed. It's not that anyone told me women couldn't be pastors, I simply had no introduction to that possibility. It wasn't until I was in high school and my father took a job as choir director at another congregation that I got to know a woman minister up close, Rev. Janet Winslow. Something about seeing Pastor Janet's leadership and preaching turned on a light bulb in the back of my mind, and I perceived a call to serve as deacon. Shortly after, when I started at Occidental College, I met another role model in ministry, Rev. Anne Cohen, who was the director of the campus interfaith center. By the time I graduated, I felt a call to pursue pastoral ministry.

A few years down the road, while I was in seminary, I got involved with the Colombia Accompaniment Program and found myself forming friendships with strong women in the Colombian church, both pastors and lay leaders. I also met Rev. Alice Winters, a long-time Presbyterian mission worker in Colombia. Alice's witness and dedication encouraged me to listen to the pull I felt toward mission service.



Rev. Sarah Henken, third from left, speaking to women from Latin American churches at a conference entitled "Rethinking Our Participation in the Church".

It was startling for me to come to Bolivia and experience a very different culture of women in the church. Here

women's ordination is a much newer idea, accepted in some of the protestant churches but not all. Even in the churches that affirm women's ordination, there continue to be very few women pastors. In the Independent Presbyterian Church in Bolivia, women's ordination is clearly endorsed in the statutes, but it is a tiny denomination, and at present there are several women elders but not pastors.

I am the first woman pastor that many of the members of the church and Bolivian society have ever met, and it's a peculiar position to be in. On the one hand, I'm grateful to be able to offer my own life and vocation as a witness to the fact that women are called and affirmed in pastoral ministry. On the other hand, it can feel like a burden, constantly answering questions and facing confused looks, doing my best to respond with love and the right balance of humility and

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authority to the resistance that is sometimes expressed, whether overtly or more subtly.

At times I worry about the effect my example will have. As a *misionera* from the U.S., I am invested with a position of power and privilege in the local church, and even though I am a woman my voice is not easily ignored. I do not want to abuse that power to impose my perspective or the PC(USA)'s practices, but at the same time I recognize a sacred opportunity to bear witness. Will I encourage women to follow their own sense of call and show both men and women in the church that we, too, can be called to preach and teach? Will I somehow offend the church leaders and cause them to question the validity or wisdom of welcoming women as pastors?

When I get wrapped up in those worries, I turn to call stories in the Bible, and support from my peers and mentors. I remind myself, too, that I am not ultimately responsible for the response of others. In preaching, my job is to diligently and prayerfully prepare a sermon and trust in the working of the Holy Spirit as it is preached. So too my role here is to faithfully and lovingly offer myself to this community where I have been sent, and trust that the Holy Spirit is at work among us. With the apostle Paul I say, "By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain" (1 Cor 15:10a).

As Hermana Justina, coordinator of the Methodist Women's Federation, said at the panel, "It's wonderful to feel called by God and affirmed by community." I give thanks for community here in Bolivia that welcomes me in spite of differences and questions. I give thanks, too, for the global community of the church that I have met in Uruguay and Argentina, Chicago and Los Angeles, Colombia and many other places, women and men who serve faithfully and help shape my response to God's call.

My prayer this Advent is that all of us, men and women, old and young, will be awakened to the new things God is doing in our midst, and blessed with the wisdom and the courage to support one another in discerning our calls and using our gifts to the glory of God.

In hope, peace, joy, and love,

Sarah

If you would like to support Sarah, or another missionary serving abroad, you should know that all gifts for missionary support through PCUSA World Mission will be doubled by a matching gift campaign through Dec. 31. These can be sent to basic missionary support or to particular mission personnel accounts, and the matching gift will go to the general fund to support the positions that need funding. Gifts given online should mention "matching gift" in the subject line.

The "Second Mile Missionary Support" account is E132192, <http://gamc.pcusa.org/give/E132192/>

Sarah's personal sending account is E200475, <http://gamc.pcusa.org/give/E200475/>

Churches and individuals can likewise send contributions to support whatever mission personnel they have a relationship with and the funds will be matched for general missionary support.

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

NOW YOU CAN CONNECT WITH PEOPLE AND CHURCHES IN THE PRESBYTERY BY VISITING OUR FACEBOOK PAGE. JUST FOLLOW THE LINK BELOW:

[HTTP://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/#!/GROUPS/6344519265/](http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/6344519265/)

BAKER'S DOZEN

*Some Thoughts from
Interim Executive Presbyter
Rev. Ken Baker*



Christmas in an Uncertain Time

Julio Diaz is a 31-year old social worker who lives in the Bronx. His trip home is usually uneventful. But NPR tells what happened “. . . *one night last month, as Diaz stepped off the No. 6 train and onto a nearly empty platform, his evening took an unexpected turn.*

He was walking toward the stairs when a teenage boy approached and pulled out a knife. "He wants my money, so I just gave him my wallet and told him, 'Here you go,'" Diaz says. As the teen began to walk away, Diaz told him, "Hey, wait a minute. You forgot something. If you're going to be robbing people for the rest of the night, you might as well take my coat to keep you warm."

Read the rest of the story at <http://www.npr.org/2008/03/28/89164759/a-victim-treats-his-mugger-right>. It's definitely worth your time. Although this isn't a particularly Christian story, it reminds me that Christ breaks into human events when and where we least expect it. Jim Milley says that we often think we are called to bring the presence of Christ into the world, but that Christ is there already at work.

Where we can find certainty is in the love and grace of Jesus Christ. While the year ahead of us may bring a number of unwelcome surprises, we have the wonderful Good News that God will never leave us nor forsake us. Our Lord is in those circumstances already.

May the blessings of the Advent and Christmas season be with you and your loved ones

WELCOMING THE STRANGER

A monthly series presented by the Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Committee.

Historically, pressure against immigrants has always increased during economic hard times, and the present time of recession is no exception. This leads us to our next myth.

Myth #4:
Immigrants are a drain on the U.S. economy.

Fact:
During the 1990's, half of all new workers were foreign-born, filling gaps by native-born workers in both the high- and low-end skill levels of the spectrum. Immigrants fill jobs in key sectors, start their own businesses, and contribute to a thriving economy. The net benefit of immigration to the U.S. is nearly \$10 billion annually. As Alan Greenspan points out, 70% of immigrants arrive in prime working age. That means we haven't spent a penny on their education, yet they are transplanted into our workforce and will contribute \$500 billion toward our social security system over the next 20 years.

Source: National Academy of Sciences, Center for Labor Market Studies and Northwestern University, Federal Reserve.



GOOD NEWS AT GRANDVIEW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH!

Rev. Scott McGinnis and his wife Sonday are the proud parents of a baby boy. Jonathan Finley Clark McGinnis was born on November 13 at 10:09 pm. Judging by the photos, it looks like both mother and the father are pretty happy about it.



HAVE YOU SEEN US ON YOUTUBE?

If not, follow the links below to find out more about some of the exciting ministries your church is involved in.

Lisa Patriquin talks about her visit to Colombia this past summer and our developing relationship with the Central Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of Colombia.



http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ACWCDG_TDn0



Jane Holslag, Presbyterian Mission Worker in Lithuania, tells us about her ministry of teaching the Bible at LCC University, and the difference your support makes.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3TakVlfmvc>



WISHING YOU



A JOYOUS CHRISTMAS

AND A

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

THE PRESBYTERY STAFF



ANNOUNCEMENTS

NATIVITY! THE MUSICAL RETURNS TO BURBANK DECEMBER 15-18

It's still the age-old story: a boy and girl go to Bethlehem, Herod goes postal, Caesar goes Vegas, baby, the Occupy Bethlehem encampment stinks to high heaven and well, we're not really sure how Lady Gaga got to the intersection of BC and AD, but she and Sir Elton sing a lovely duet. *Nativity! The Musical*, going into its seventh year, takes the concept of the traditional Christmas pageant and turns it on its ear, employing pop hits and show tunes, Borscht-belt humor and figures from today's headlines to render the Nativity story more relevant than ever.

The original musical comedy, written and directed by entertainment industry veterans Greg and Melissa Baldwin, will be staged by Imagine, the drama ministry of Westminster Presbyterian Church (<http://www.westpresburbank.org>) on December 15 (7 p.m.), 16 (8 p.m.), 17 (2 p.m. and 8 p.m.) and 18 (2 p.m. and 8 p.m.) in the church's sanctuary, located at 542 N. Buena Vista Street (at the corner of Buena Vista and Clark) in Burbank.



“Enjoy the lighter side of Nativity!”
Los Angeles Daily News

A donation of \$10 per adult (or \$8 in advance) and \$7 per student (or \$5 in advance) is suggested. For tickets or more information, call Westminster Presbyterian Church at (818) 842-5264 or visit <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/209918>. You can check out YouTube videos of numbers from previous seasons of *Nativity! The Musical* at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pVHS3pFSy2M&feature=related>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHTPC_MiZ3Y

WANTED:

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT FOR THE FULLER CENTER FOR HOUSING

This is a volunteer position that can grow as we grow.

The job description:

- ◆ Responsible for interfacing with the Presbyterian churches in the San Fernando Valley (we will certainly welcome other churches) on behalf of the San Fernando Fuller Center for Housing.
- ◆ Tell the story and history of The Fuller Group.
- ◆ Gathering of interested churches to explore fund raising opportunities.
- ◆ Join with others to search for other distressed houses, suitable for rehab as we have just completed our first project.

Contact Jim Adams
Phone: 818-497-8606
Email: sawtooth7@sbcglobal.net



Please consider helping children enjoy Christmas by donating a new toy and/or some of your time to the Family Rescue Center's 2011 Toy Event.

- ◆ On Wednesday, Dec. 14th and Thursday, December 15th please bring toys, still in their original boxes, to the Family Rescue Center.
- ◆ Friday, December 16th - starting at 9:00 AM, we need to sort all the toys by category.
- ◆ Saturday, December 17th - starting at 8:30 AM, we need help with gift wrapping.

<http://rescatefamilycenter.org/>

The 2012 Princeton Forums on Youth Ministry



CREATE! **Our theme for 2012**

Engaging, reflective, and theologically substantive, the Princeton Forums on Youth Ministry are an uncommon mix of practical and theological exploration of ministry with young people. Come be part of a gathering where artists, musicians, preachers, biblical scholars, theologians, writers, and youth ministers join their hearts and minds to explore creativity and the creative potential of young people as builders of the Kingdom of God.

January 23–26, 2012
First Presbyterian Church
Santa Barbara, CA

Fee: \$350 (see web site for available discounts)
Details and registration at www.ptsem.edu/iy
Contact us: iym@ptsem.edu • 609.497.7914

www.ptsem.edu/iy

First Presbyterian Church, Downey
Part Time Director, After School Enrichment Program
Part Time Director of Student Ministries

First Presbyterian Church of Downey will have ministry opportunities available for qualified students the beginning of 2012. The following position descriptions are being developed. The right candidate could fill both positions to create a full time position with benefits.

Part Time Director of After School Enrichment Program called "Kidz Konnection"
3-6 p.m. Monday – Thursdays provides tutoring, music and art lessons, and non-competitive sports for ages 1st – 8th grade. 20 hours a week, hourly rate depending on experience of applicant.

Part Time Director of Student Ministries called "Elektus"
Fridays from 7-9p.m., Sundays from 9-11:30 a.m., other various events. 20 hours a week, hourly rate depending on experience of applicant.

Please contact:

Rev. Candie Bankman
fpc.candie@verizon.net

First Presbyterian Church of Downey
10544 Downey Ave.
Downey, CA 90241
P: (562) 861-6752 | F: (562) 904-2173
www.fpcdowney.com

Pasadena Presbyterian Church
Temporary Associate Pastor/Pastoral Leader, English language Ministry

Pasadena Presbyterian Church, a large (more than 1,100 members) church in downtown Pasadena, California, is seeking a temporary, part-time (¾ time) associate pastor or pastoral leader focusing primarily on its English-language ministry. A call to pastoral leadership and a commitment to multicultural ministry are required. A Master of Divinity degree, one to three years of pastoral leadership, and experience in Presbyterian polity are highly desirable.

The position description and more information may be downloaded at:
www.ppc.net/elsearch.htm

You may also contact Bob Thomas:

E-Mail: BobTatFORE@aol.com

Phone: 818 209-04635

Deadline for PIF/resume submissions is Dec. 15, 2011.

The News of San Fernando Presbytery is published monthly by the Communication & Church Support Committee, Areta Crowell, Chair. Submissions and comments should be sent to Casey Maddren, Editor. E-Mail: cmaddren@sfpresby.org