



THE NEWS

July/August
2011

OF SAN FERNANDO PRESBYTERY

NEWS

PRESBYTERIES VOTE TO ADOPT NEW FORM OF GOVERNMENT

On June 7 of this year, Trinity Presbytery voted to approve the new Form of Government for the PCUSA, thus hitting the magic number of 87 needed to ratify the proposed changes to the church's Constitution. The new Form of Government will take effect July 10, 2011, but church leaders emphasize that adapting to the changes will take time.

This is the first full revision of the Form of Government since the Presbyterian Church in the United States and the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America reunited to form the PCUSA. In response to the vote, denominational leaders issued a letter to all congregations. In it, they write, "While the new Form of Government will help the PCUSA to be a faithful and responsive church in the 21st century, it also has a dimension of bringing us back to a truly constitutional document that contains broad governing and theological principles and emphasizes function over structure."

The letter continues, "Many Presbyterians will see nothing suddenly or dramatically different with a new Form of Government. Worship services will go on as usual, and congregations will continue to teach the faith, serve their communities, reach out to those in need, and work to further God's realm on earth. However, what will be different is that congregations, presbyteries, and synods will have the opportunity to tailor mission and ministry to fit their own particular contexts and challenges."

For more information on the changes, visit the Form of Government Task Force page on the PCUSA web site:

<http://oga.pcusa.org/formofgovernment/>

To see a comparison of the current language and the new language, follow the link below:

<http://oga.pcusa.org/formofgovernment/pdfs/1-comparison-new-to-current-nov09.pdf>

REV. GARY DART STEPS DOWN AFTER 20 YEARS AT PANORAMA

After almost 40 years in ministry, and 20 years at Panorama Presbyterian Church, the Rev. Gary Dart will be retiring at the end of this month. On June 12, the congregation gathered for an emotional farewell which began with a special worship service. During his sermon, Gary recalled that he was initially only supposed to serve at Panorama for five weeks, which somehow stretched into two decades. The day ended with lunch in the fellowship hall, which was packed to capacity with family and friends. Many spoke fondly of both Gary and his wife, Diane, sharing their memories of his many years at the church.

In addition to his ministry at Panorama, Gary has contributed to the life of the Presbytery in numerous ways. He held the office of Stated Clerk from May, 2008 to September, 2009, and has also served on the Committee on Ministry, Communication & Church Support Committee and the Personnel Committee. But his work has also taken him beyond the bounds of his own denomination. Gary has made a point of reaching out to people of different traditions and different faiths. He has worked to build relationships with Catholics, Baptists, Jews, Muslims and Buddhists. Valley Beth Israel President Ron Trachtenberg had this to say about Gary:



A friend embracing Rev. Gary Dart at his retirement party

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“We at Valley Beth Israel have had a special relationship with Reverend Gary Dart and the members of his congregation at Panorama Presbyterian Church for many years. Along with our Rabbi Emeritus, Morris Rubinstein, Rev. Dart was instrumental in creating an interfaith service that has now continued for 17 years. His foresight and desire to unite the community for



the better good of all has resulted in a lasting friendship for three neighborhood religious institutions (Panorama Presbyterian Church, Valley Beth Israel synagogue, St. Genevieve Catholic Church). Rev. Dart has been a staunch supporter of Valley Beth Israel and the Jewish people. We will miss his great personality, his caring and his wonderful sermons all of which signify his desire to see a better world. His efforts are proof that people of different religions can live together in harmony.”

Then EP Jerry North presents Gary with a gift to show the Presbytery's appreciation upon his retirement as Stated Clerk in 2009.

Pat Huggard, a long-time member at Panorama, probably speaks for many in the congregation when she says: “Not many people can stretch five weeks into 20 years, but Rev. Gary Dart did just that. And if the congregation of Panorama Presbyterian Church had their way, we’d stretch it still further to 40 years. He was a great minister and a wonderful friend to all. We all wish him and Diane a wonderful retirement, but they both will be missed dearly.”

NORTHLAND VILLAGE CHURCH USES SYNOD STIMULUS TO FUND ART WALK IN ATWATER

One of Commissioned Lay Pastor Nick Warnes' goals for Northland Village Church is to find innovative ways to connect with the surrounding community. Recently the church participated with artists, musicians and local businesses to create the Atwater Art Walk, funded in part by a Synod stimulus grant. Here Nick describes the process that led to staging the event.

Our team is so thankful for the Presbytery Grant that we were given. The money has allowed us to execute a sustainable system that will now produce ministry for years to come.

We started with a team of 5 people that began meeting in November of 2010. We dreamed of a night that would include a space for people from different cultures to share their stories through their art. Over the next six months we turned this dream into a reality.

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We built a website that would be the center of all activity, not only for the Atwater Art Walk, but for all art in NE Los Angeles. (Please check it out at www.atwaterartwalk.com) We used this website to paint our event across all social networking websites. This really built a buzz for us across the internet in Los Angeles. (LA Times Twitter told our story!)

We partnered with 8 local businesses, two local schools, 6 bands and the Atwater Village Neighborhood Council to build the event. We also mobilized 25 volunteers and 50 artists to create the Atwater Art Walk.

The event was held on May 14th as we posted 50 pieces of art at different businesses throughout Glendale Blvd. Best estimates indicates that over 500 people participated in the Atwater Art Walk and approximately 250 people voted on their favorite piece of art.

The people were diverse, stories were shared, and our goal of creating space for God to do God's work of reconciliation was accomplished. We connected Northland Village Church with hundreds of people and we pray that those relationships now expand. Everyone kept asking us if we would do another one next month! The event was a HUGE success and using the rest of the funds, we have created a sustainable event as we also gathered submission fees for next year's Atwater Art Walk.

Be sure to see the 12 minute film that was created at...

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2TAZ34_W9E&feature=youtu.be



Susanne Krausse, one of the artists featured in the Atwater Art Walk

BAKER'S DOZEN

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



ANOTHER MONTH, ANOTHER BOOK OF ORDER REVISION!

And this is a big one! With the passage of Amendment 10-1, the Form of Government has been replaced with a new text. Our previous Form of Government essentially told Presbyterians what to do and how to do. The New Form of Government tells us what to do and as far as how to do it says: "You figure it out!" And that's what we'll have to do.

Although we as a presbytery didn't vote for it, the New FoG gives us some flexibility we wouldn't otherwise have. We can develop some procedures that make more sense to us than to people voting at a General Assembly. And we can provide some leeway in new ministries such as church planting that would have been unavailable before.

However, there are some requirements in the New FoG that need immediate. If your church hasn't set a quorum and notice standard for a congregational meeting, you need to do that as soon as possible. Also, and very important, is the new requirement for every congregation to have a sexual misconduct policy. If you already have one, look it over now and make sure it is fairly current (updated within the past three years). If you don't have one or if it is not current, please call the presbytery office and we can suggest some wording that may be helpful.

Most importantly, if you have a policy, you must follow it every time an incident develops. Where churches get into trouble is when they give someone a pass on inappropriate behavior because "that's just George and we all understand he didn't mean anything by it." If you have a policy and follow it you are afforded significant legal protection. If you don't, a judge will probably not understand about George!

It's a new era for Presbyterians. We don't know where God will lead us, but we do know Jesus Christ holds our future.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2011 CALIFORNIA *Small Church Conference*

**Friday, October 28
Saturday, October 29
Kirk o' the Valley Presbyterian Church
19620 Vanowen, Reseda**

Click on the link below to download the brochure:

<http://www.pfrenewal.org/docs/smallchurch/2011-CAWK-Brochure.pdf>

SAVE THE DATE!

2011 CROP WALK

Sunday, November 6

LOCATION TBD

MORE INFORMATION TO COME

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.

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