



# THE NEWS

June  
2011

OF SAN FERNANDO PRESBYTERY

## NEWS

### **NEW SYNOD EXEC/CLERK WELCOMED AT MAY MEETING**

Commissioners managed to plow through a full docket and even leave a little bit early when Presbytery met on Tuesday, May 24 at Panorama Presbyterian Church. The day started with a potluck lunch, followed by workshops. The meeting began at 3:00 pm with worship, followed by the introduction of the new Synod Executive/Stated Clerk, a presentation on how to create guidelines for conduct within churches, and committee reports. The meeting adjourned just before 7:00 pm.

The potluck lunch featured Julia Thorne, Manager for Immigration Issues and Immigration Counsel at General Assembly, who spoke to attendees about the many different sides to immigration questions. Later Thorne conducted a workshop on the same topic. Other workshops were given by Elder Brent Kuszyk, on church marketing and communications, and Elder Dave Lessley, on stewardship.

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Immediately after worship, commissioners were introduced to Elder Doska Ross, who recently began serving as the Synod Executive/Stated Clerk. Doska most recently served as Manager of Polity Guidance and Training in the Constitutional Services Department at General Assembly. The business portion of the meeting featured a presentation by Carl Kotheimer of the Insurance Board. Kotheimer discussed the importance of churches having written abuse prevention policies that are comprehensive, up-to-date, and address contemporary issues such as the use of social media. More information can be found on the *Safety Solutions* link at:



Elder Doska Ross,  
Synod Exec/Stated Clerk

[www.insuranceboard.org](http://www.insuranceboard.org)

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry brought two people before Presbytery. The first was Doug Abel, an Inquirer from Glendale Presbyterian Church. The second was Liliana Castaneda, who was received as an Inquirer by Los Ranchos Presbytery, but is now attending Canoga Park Presbyterian Church and wished to transfer to San Fernando Presbytery. Commissioners voted to approve both.



Inquirer Liliana Castaneda Mejia



Inquirer Doug Abel

During the meeting Moderator Areta Crowell asked attendees to come forward to share good news about things that were happening in their congregation. Elder John Vander Giessen came forward to say that First, Burbank had plans to renovate their sanctuary, and had already received over \$1 million in pledges. And Elder Dennis Graves enthusiastically reported soaring attendance at Community of the Lakes, Lake Hughes.

## A LETTER FROM SOUTH AMERICA

*Rev. Sarah Henken works under the auspices of the General Assembly Mission Council, serving as Regional Liaison for the Andean Region. Below is a letter she wrote at Easter to report on a recent visit to a church in Colombia.*

Colorful streamers danced under whirling ceiling fans as we sat together in the sanctuary. The rolling sound of a *vallenato* song of praise washed over us — accordion, voice, rhythm instruments. It brought a gentle close to the time of testimony and life stories we had shared on that hot tropical morning.

A group of us from the Colombia Mission Network, from both the U.S. church, the PC(USA) and the Colombian church (IPC), were paying a visit to one of the rural churches in Urabá Presbytery in northwestern Colombia. This was my third visit to the churches of Urabá. An exuberant welcome awaited us at the church — children hanging on the gate and over two dozen men and women from the congregation standing in the yard. After greetings and a blessed refreshment of cool drinks under the large shade tree, we gathered in the sanctuary to use the sound system so all could hear. Over 40 people, including lots of children, had gathered on this weekday morning to greet us and share stories of life and faith.

Those of us from the United States shared greetings and described the Colombia Mission Network and the Accompaniment Program and what our participation means to us. The local church members told us about their congregation, established 30 years ago in this remote corner of Colombia, and the central role it has played in the life of the community, providing leadership on the Communal Action Board, which oversees and organizes education and services for the community. They have seen their share of troubles from over 60 years of armed conflict in Colombia but carry on to develop the community and ensure good food and bright prospects for their children.

As I sit to write, my thoughts keep going back to the church band. The singer expressed the effect God's love has had in her life — how even in the midst of a sinful, indifferent world she recognizes the need for change and to share that love with those who so desperately need it. And something within me says, Amen. So, what does it mean to look for Jesus the Savior in this world of pain, violence and injustice? And, when we are able to see Jesus in the midst of it all, what is he saying? What is he doing? Who is he with? How can we live today as faithful disciples of the one who said, "Follow me"?



Church musicians praise God through song in Urabá, Colombia

Each time I go to Colombia I encounter these questions. In surveillance by unmarked vehicles that follow our group to see what we're doing. In backbreaking labor that church members undertake to support their congregation's ministries. In faces of friends new and old who whisper stories of brutal murders, threats, intimidation. It is all so foreign to my personal story, the life that I know in the United States. And yet I know it is true, after hearing so many brothers and sisters share the experiences lived in their own bodies, minds, and souls.

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Even in this Good Friday world, the IPC and its members choose to proclaim the Resurrection. Living with hope and joy, promoting peaceful alternatives for their communities and nation, they insist on the promise and possibility of a different way, founded on their faith in Jesus, who came so that we might have life. How can we, from the United States, do likewise? I don't have an easy or complete answer, but there are steps we are taking to live in hope and solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Colombia.



U.S. and Colombian delegates to the Colombia Mission Network meeting in Bogotá, February 2011

We do this as a national church, supporting long-term mission workers who accompany the IPC and its partners, listening and sharing stories, and who enrich theological education, giving church leaders tools to relate biblical stories to their context. Individuals volunteer as short-term accompaniers, showing by their presence that the life and struggle of the Colombian people are connected to their own lives in the one body of Christ. Members of the Colombia Mission Network visit the IPC and invite partners to the United States to share their faith and witness. We are all encouraged by the PC(USA) General Assembly to join in prayer for the people

of Colombia and in action to redirect U.S. foreign policy and military aid in ways that promote the possibility of peace. These sometimes feel like small steps in a thick forest, but I have confidence that they are faithful.

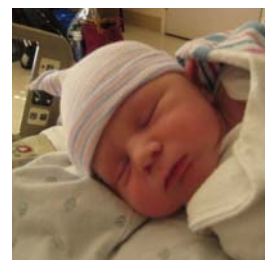
Thank you for joining me on this journey. Your prayers, notes, and financial contributions give me strength and encouragement; I hope you will continue to accompany me. As you can see, there are many ways to be involved in ministry in Colombia, and I would be delighted to share more details with you, or hear your questions or ideas. After spending February and March with our partners in Colombia and Venezuela, I am back at home in La Paz, rested up, with eyes open and eager to see the next steps that God is preparing on this journey of Resurrection living.

In Easter joy and hope,  
Sarah

### THE NEXT GENERATION....



Good news for San Fernando Presbytery. It's raining babies. The News neglected to report the arrival earlier this year of Ethan Kintner, son of Rev. Zac Kintner and his wife Beth (left). In May, Rev. Bill Sperry and his wife Molly welcomed Benjamin Sperry into the world (below). And there are more on the way! Stay tuned for further developments.



## LA CRESCENTA MISSION TEAMS VISIT DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND ARIZON RESERVATION

*The following article was submitted to The News by La Crescenta Presbyterian Church.*

During the week of April 2, La Crescenta Presbyterian sent two mission teams into the field – one to La Romana, the Dominican Republic and one to the Vah Ki Indian Reservation in Arizona.

The Dominican Republic team consisted of 43 people, with 19 of them being high school and college students. This marks the 9th consecutive year that the church has sent a team to the DR. The purpose of the mission is two-fold: One team works on construction building a church and a school in a poor barrio in La Romana. The other team is a medical team that consists of doctors, dentists, nurses and volunteers. The medical team visits multiple bateyes which are small villages located out in the sugar cane fields. The residents have no running water or electricity and many of the men cut sugar cane for \$10 a day.



Rev. Andy Wilson with two Dominican boys

This year the medical team, led by Dr. Randall Wetzel of Los Angeles Children's Hospital, treated approximately 1,000 patients including over 200 adults at a prison. The team also distributed thousands of dollars worth of medicine and medical supplies to the patients. Pastor Andy Wilson and his wife Mary head up this mission each year.



LCPC's Arizona Mission Team

The Arizona team consisted of approximately 30 people including 14 junior high students. This marks the 19<sup>th</sup> year the LCPC has sent a team to the Vah Ki Reservation. This year the team worked on small construction projects such as painting and patio building for the Vah Ki Presbyterian Church. Team members distributed used bicycles to needy residents on the reservation. The team was led by church members Jerry White and Mike and Sue Pratt.

## GOING GREEN

### Gardening, Gleaning, and Supporting Local Growers

*by Wendy Gist, Mission Advocate for Hunger, Poverty, and Peacemaking Issues*

A number of Presbyterian churches are addressing hunger in their communities with church gardens and by gleaning fruit from neighbors' trees. They are donating the harvest to food pantries or soup kitchens - which often don't have fresh produce - as part of their local hunger ministry. Other churches are supporting local farmers by hosting Farmer's Markets or by becoming a drop-off point for Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) boxes.

Does your church have a vegetable garden or fruit trees on its property? Do members of your church pick fruit for a local food pantry or soup kitchen? Is your church a drop-off site for CSA boxes or does it host a Farmer's Market? Are you interested in involving your church in any of these possibilities? We want to know about it!

Our Presbytery and the Presbyterian Hunger Program are interested in finding out which churches support local produce growth and distribution and how they do so. As the Mission Advocate, this is a very interesting topic for me as well. So, I am asking you to click on any appropriate link below and answer a mere 10 questions (2 minutes of your time per survey), so we can find out what is being done at PC(USA) churches in our area.

The Presbytery will make results of the surveys available, so we can learn who is doing what and how we can coordinate our efforts to support each other and distribute local produce. We hope to hear from you!

1. For those of you who attend **churches that grow fruit and/or vegetables** AND for those who are interested in this possibility, please click on the following link.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GN6HC5R>

2. For those of you who attend **churches that host a Farmer's Market or that are a drop-off site for Community Supported Agriculture boxes** AND for those of you who are interested in this possibility, please click on the following link.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GP2GB3G>

3. For those of you who attend **churches that have members who have picked produce for local distribution or who have members who are willing and able to do so** but have not had the opportunity as yet, please click on the following link.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BKYS95K>

Thank you for your participation!

## ***BAKER'S DOZEN***

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



**NOTE:** Some of you may remember that Ken, when he named this feature “Baker’s Dozen”, promised to throw in an extra column at some point to live up to the title. This month he gives us his thoughts on the church in the 21st century, as well as the passage of Amendment 10-A.

### **A VISION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY**

If you weren’t able to be with us at our May stated meeting, I gave a report to the presbytery in which I highlighted three areas we need to address . . . I call them the 3Ms: *Mission, Money and Meetings*.

In *Mission*, our presbytery is moving ahead well in helping existing churches through the process of transformation, and planting new churches. However, we don’t have nearly enough people involved in these areas of ministry, and we need people who are learning how to carry on these mission efforts.

In terms of *Money*, we have a strong balance sheet with good asset management. At the same time, the basic mission giving contributed by our churches, which provides major support to our presbytery staff and services, continues to decline year after year. It’s not unusual, but it’s a problem we need to address.

We also need to take a look at *Meetings*. I love our meetings because I see so many of my friends! And we have a great group of new younger ministers, but very few younger elders. But maybe our meetings are not events that work well for younger lay leaders. Can we adapt our “business model” more toward the 21<sup>st</sup> century? I believe we can.

Therefore, the presbytery authorized the formation of a Vision Team to help us look at what we are called to do and be as we approach the year 2020. This group is going to conduct most of its work online, but we’re going to have a preliminary meeting on Monday, June 13<sup>th</sup> from 2-4 p.m. at the presbytery office. If you’d like to be part of this conversation, send us an e-mail at [2020@sfpresby.org](mailto:2020@sfpresby.org). Even if you can’t participate regularly and would just like to submit a thought or suggestion, let us know through that address and we’ll record and preserve all these suggestions for consideration as we move toward implementation.

## ***BAKER'S DOZEN (CONTINUED)***

### **AMENDMENT 10-A PASSES**

Last month, our denomination approved amendment 10-A to our *Book of Order*. The amendment removed the “fidelity and chastity” language from the Book. The new language allows for a variety of understandings about who may be ordained to offices of leadership in the PCUSA.

This change has brought joy and celebration to some in our tradition as well as grief and discouragement to others. For the immediate future, neither our local churches nor our presbytery need to change the standards we use to evaluate prospective officers of the church. That does not, however, mean that there won't be changes. Eventually more avowed gay and lesbian persons will be in leadership roles in some churches and some presbyteries.

Other related changes in our *Book of Order* may be introduced. Regardless of our beliefs about these matters, how we react to them will say a lot about our trust in the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

One way that we can honor God in this changing period is simply to remain in dialogue with one another on these matters. To become alienated from each other over this or other issues diminishes our witness and our effectiveness. While there may be matters of conscience on which people cannot compromise, we can still remember that we're part of God's church together.

So if you have questions or issues with this decision, regardless of which way you come down on it, please get in touch with us at the presbytery office. We are committed to providing you with the most timely and accurate information about what it may mean for our churches and our presbytery. We will never agree on all aspects of theology and practice, but we can be faithful to the Lord in how we continue to love one another.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **FAMILY RESCUE CENTER ("RESCATE")**

**urgently needs**

**CHILDREN'S CLOTHING!**

**[www.rescatefamilycenter.org](http://www.rescatefamilycenter.org)**

**Diane Whitmore 818-887-2274**

**Presbyterian Women in the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii**

**SUMMER CONFERENCE**

***Blessed Are You,  
Rejoice!!!***

**July 15-17, 2011**

**Chapman University, Orange, CA**

**The Reverend Magdalena Garcia**

**Keynote Speaker, Bible Study and Worship Leader**

**Marta Rodriguez**

**Moderator Presbyterian Women Churchwide**

**Christian Muslim Consultative Group**

**“Take It to the Congregation” Team**

***Workshops \* Forums \* Mercado***

**Registration Forms are available from Carole Wheeler:  
661 259-4615 or [carolewheeler@pacbell.net](mailto:carolewheeler@pacbell.net)**

**WOODLAND HILLS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**Secretarial Position**

The primary purpose of the position is to provide support to the church in the areas of finance, document preparation, record keeping, and general office duties. Must Know Microsoft Word, Excel, Publisher and Quickbooks.

12 hours per week, to be scheduled between 8am-5pm – Tuesday-Friday

Please send Resume to Rev. Bob Thomson, Woodland Hills Presbyterian Church, 5751 Platt Ave., Woodland Hills, CA 91367

Fax: 818-346-7826

Email: [whpreschurch@yahoo.com](mailto:whpreschurch@yahoo.com)

**KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PASADENA**  
**Youth Ministries Director (Emphasis: Middle School)**

Knox Presbyterian Church in Pasadena, CA is seeking an individual to develop and lead our youth programs (Middle School and High School) with a primary, initial focus on Middle School youth (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade). It is a paid position starting at 10 hour a week, \$20 an hour, and affords the opportunity to be a part of a supportive staff and congregation in a dynamic church community. This position can also be used to fulfill Fuller's part-time internship requirement. Resumes and inquiries may be emailed to:

[knoxyouthresume@gmail.com](mailto:knoxyouthresume@gmail.com)

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](mailto:cmaddren@sfpresby.org)