



THE NEWS

Sept.
2011

OF SAN FERNANDO PRESBYTERY

NEWS

SEPTEMBER PRESBYTERY

First Presbyterian Church, Granada Hills, will be hosting the Stated Meeting of Presbytery on Saturday, September 24 at 9:00 am. The agenda should be full, as there are many issues to be addressed by Commissioners.

In addition to business items, the assembly will also honor the ministry of Rev. Gary Dart, who is retiring after serving for 20 years as pastor of Panorama Presbyterian Church. Also in attendance will be Rev. Sara Armstrong, who works under the auspices of the General Assembly Mission Council as a delegation and partnership coordinator in Peru. (For more info about Sara Armstrong, please see Sarah Henken's report on page 2.)

FPC, Granada Hills is located at 10400 Zelzah in Northridge. For directions, visit the church's web site at:

<http://www.fpcgh.org/index.php>

JOINING HANDS ACROSS BORDERS

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. Below is her report on a recent trip to Peru.

When I accepted my call as a Regional Liaison with Presbyterian World Mission, I knew it would mean a lot of travel. Even so, this first year has been intense! For my latest trip at the end of July, I left my home in La Paz, Bolivia, taking a 14 hour bus ride over the Altiplano and through the Andes Mountains, across the border and into Peru, to the ancient city of Cusco. I was going to meet up with two of our Presbyterian mission co-workers, Sara Armstrong and Rusty Edmondson, and a youth mission team they were hosting of about 20 high schoolers and 10 adults from First Presbyterian Church of Heritage, Ohio.

That Sunday, we split into small groups for spirit-filled worship with congregations in Cusco of the Iglesia Evangélica Peruana, or IEP, one of our partner denominations. Then we loaded up all the luggage and rode an hour down the road to the town of Urcos, where we settled into our work site for the week and met the local youth from the Synod of Cusco who were joining the group from the U.S.



Some of the youth and Pastor Kevin from Ohio

Our task for the week: give a little TLC to a neglected church property, built in the 1960s as a clinic and now envisioned as a retreat center for churches in the region. With about 30 gallons of paint, and wood to assemble 30 bunk beds, plus a machete and some rakes for clearing the yard, there was plenty of work for youth from two countries to do, side by side.

We ate together, washed dishes together, laughed together, and prayed together. In the local church fashion, each day opened with group devotions before breakfast, and closed with worship in the evening. On the first day, the energy

was palpable, with the youth all excited to meet the group from the other country. But then the difficulties of language barriers and cultural differences began to set in--how can you eat that stuff? why don't you clean your plate? why don't you speak up more? why don't you know how to flush the toilet with a bucket of water?

There were moments when differences and misunderstandings threatened to mar the hopeful beginnings of unity, and there was some nervousness on the part of the leaders. But God's Spirit was clearly at work, and the times of sharing and fellowship helped the kids to reach one another across the divide. Dressing up in costume, sharing reflections on God's Word, teaching Peruvian campfire games, and introducing the delicacy of toasted marshmallows and s'mores, the kids drew closer to one another and strengthened their faith.

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The theme for the week was Friendship Without Borders, and it was a delight for me to take part in it. I was there partly to learn about the work that Sara and Rusty do with mission teams in Peru, partly to get acquainted with the IEP church, but my most important job there in that space was to be one of the interpreters for the week, helping folks on each side to communicate in effective and meaningful ways with the other.

In the end, there was a clear sense that the week had been a success. Not only had walls been painted and bunk beds installed, but relationships were forged and we all learned more about what it means to be the diverse body of Christ. The closing worship service was a time for exchanges of gifts, tears, and hugs, saying goodbye with promises to keep in touch and to pray for one another. This was a first step toward one another, into that in-between space where God's presence is felt in a special way. What a privilege to be called to share in such holy places of encounter!



A game of bi-lingual Pictionary

BAKER'S DOZEN

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



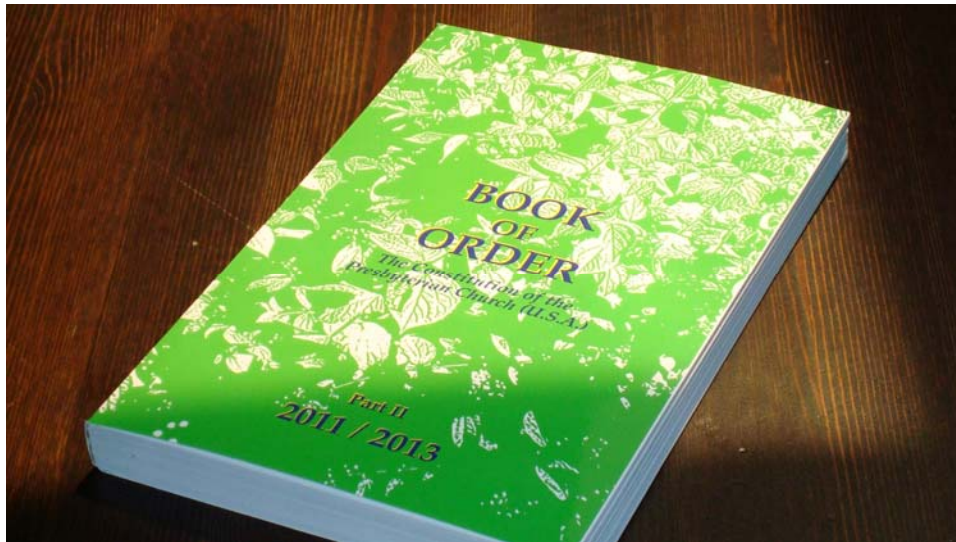
Most organizations lose their focus over time. I once interviewed for a job where they tried to explain the group's purpose to me. People talked for 20 minutes and I was still confused. Obviously so were they. Then I asked a friend about the purpose of an organization where he served on the board. He said: "Our goal is to end disease-caused blindness in Western Nepal by the year 2000." (this was 1986) The former group is probably still floundering; the second one achieved their goal.

The first challenge for any organization, church or otherwise, is to figure out what are we here for? We know, or should know, why the church is here (see *Commission, Great*). The challenge for a presbytery is to be clear on what to do about that: to be a regulatory body, a mission agency, a caring fellowship, a training organization, a support team . . .

During September we hope to look, in our committees, our council and our stated meeting at our mission in the early part of the 21st century. Since the Great Commission is our "main thing," what are we to do about it?

We hope you'll be a part of that conversation!

New Form of Government Requires New Choices



Because of the New Form of Government which is now a part of our *Book of Order*, there are some decisions which Session need to make soon which used to be spelled out in our old Form of Government. If your session hasn't taken the steps below, you need to do so at the earliest possible time.

Decisions Sessions Need to Make

- Whether to keep a list of inactive members (G-1.04)
- How will you prepare people for active membership? (G-1.0402)
- How will you examine those elected as deacons and ruling elders? (G 2.0104b)
- What term will the session clerk serve? (G-3.0104)
- Develop a manual of operations, including a sexual misconduct policy and a process for financial review. (G-3.0106, 3.0113, and 3.0205)
- Obtain property and liability coverage (G-3.0112)
- Determine the quorum for session meetings. (G-3.0203)

If you don't yet have a sexual misconduct policy, the presbytery will be making some recommendations soon. If you don't have a manual of operations, the best approach is to describe what you actually do, and then make changes and improvements from there, rather than adopt a boilerplate text from some other church which doesn't really fit your situation.

As we all adapt to these changes, please know that your presbytery staff are here to serve you and make this process easier. Please don't hesitate to contact us at (818) 891-4781 if you have questions.

GA STATED CLERK RESPONDS TO DEBT CEILING DEAL

By Sharon Youngs, Presbyterian News Service

The Reverend Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PCUSA, issued a statement recently in response to the bill signed by President Obama that will increase the debt-ceiling by more than \$2 trillion and cut a roughly equivalent amount of spending from the U.S. budget.

In the statement, Parsons writes, "While I am pleased that the nation no longer faces the impending financial peril of default on our national debt, I am deeply troubled by the deficit-reduction package that Congress passed to get us to this place." According to Parsons, the budget package "does little to address the underlying causes of our mounting deficits."

Parsons had joined a number of religious leaders in Washington the previous week to urge Congress "to enact a deficit-reduction plan that would require a greater contribution from those who have been blessed with plenty, and not to sacrifice the poor and vulnerable on the altar of political ideology or deficit reduction."

The ecumenical and interfaith leaders had also reminded legislators that religious communities and charitable organizations do not have the resources to make up the difference between the spending cuts and the "growing and monumental need caused by a severe recession, anemic recovery, and systemic inequity."

Parsons writes, "Private charity needs public partnership in order to answer our call to feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick, and visit those in prison."

The Stated Clerk acknowledges helpful measures within the bill – exemptions for low-income programs, as well as and a reduction in military spending, which will help to push the country toward seeking "new and innovative initiatives for peace around the world."

Parsons concludes his statement by inviting Presbyterians to join the effort. "United by our shared commitment to Micah's call to do justice, love kindness, walk humbly with our God, and to the common good for our brothers and sisters around the world, we must urge our elected leaders to protect the vulnerable and restore equity in a society where imbalance of wealth has become the norm."

REV. EDWARD DANKS, 1931—2011

Late in August, Rev. Edward Danks passed away. He had been suffering from multiple health problems. Danks served in San Fernando Presbytery from 1959 to 1977, spending many of those years at First Presbyterian Church, Burbank. He also served as General Assembly Commissioner in 1966.

A memorial service will be held at FPC, Burbank, on September 22 at 1:00 pm. For more information, call 818 842-5103.

WELCOMING THE STRANGER

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

Most of us in this country are descended from economic or forced migrants. Some of us have traced our ancestry and take pride in our countries and cultures of origin and in the history of hardships overcome by our forebears. And yet in our times immigrants continue to face discrimination and unjust treatment. How are we, as the church, called to be different, to welcome the stranger. We can start by countering the myths which abound about immigrants. With this in mind, we're starting a "Myth of the Month" series. Here is the first:

Myth #1: Today's immigrants are different than those of 100 years ago.

Fact: The percentage of the U.S. population that is foreign-born now stands at 11.5%; in the early 20th century it was approximately 15%. Similar to today's immigrants, those of 100 years ago initially often settled in mono-ethnic neighborhoods, spoke their native languages, and built up newspapers and businesses that catered to their fellow émigrés. They also experienced the same types of discrimination that today's immigrants face, and integrated within American culture at a similar rate. If we view history objectively, we remember that every new wave of immigrants has been met with suspicion and doubt and yet, ultimately, every past wave of immigrants has been vindicated and saluted.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFERENCE ON PROTESTANTISM IN COLOMBIA

The first National Conference on the History of Protestantism in Colombia will be held on October 13-16, 2011 in Bogota, Colombia, hosted by the Central Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of Colombia. This ecumenical event, organized by the School of Bible and Theology, will be attracting clergy and lay leaders from all over the country. Central Presbytery has offered to provide food, lodging and possibly a translator for anyone in San Fernando Presbytery who might be interested in attending the conference. San Fernando Presbytery is willing to offer some assistance with airfare. If you are interested in taking advantage of this opportunity, please contact Lisa Patriquin, chair of the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Work Group, at 818-521-9252 or lpatriquin@glenpres.org.

**FIELD TRIP TO THE HOME AND STUDIO OF
JOHN AUGUST SWANSON**

8417 HOLY CROSS PLACE
LOS ANGELES 90045 (WESTCHESTER)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2011

**\$25 INCLUDES LUNCH AND A CONTRIBUTION TO
THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR HISPANIC ELDERLY.**
(The National Association for Hispanic Elderly's programs for employment
and housing for low-income seniors are supported by Mr. Swanson's work.)

THERE WILL BE TWO SESSIONS and LUNCH WITH MR. SWANSON:

10:00 A.M.

MORNING PARTICIPANTS WILL MEET AT MR. SWANSON'S HOME

12:00 NOON

LUNCH at ALEJO'S RESTAURANT

FOR *BOTH* MORNING *AND* AFTERNOON PARTICIPANTS

8335 Lincoln Blvd., Westchester (walking distance from Mr. Swanson's)

1:30 P.M.

AFTERNOON PARTICIPANTS WILL MEET AT MR. SWANSON'S HOME

RESERVATIONS ARE LIMITED

and are required by

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6.

Please select morning or afternoon preference, and respond to:

Carole Wheeler at 661-259-4615

OR

carolewheeler@pacbell.net

PEACEMAKING OFFERING

“A harvest of justice is sown in peace” (James 3:18) is the theme for the 2011 Peacemaking Offering. James’s letter to the early church exhorts Christians to seek earnestly the wisdom of God, setting aside the pretenses of human wisdom. James describes God’s true wisdom as “first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy.” (3:17) We Christians long for a more just and peaceful world—where the worth of a person is valued, where greed no longer rules and hunger no longer results, where bullets and bombs no longer devastate. God’s word shows us the way: that a harvest of justice and righteousness will be sown by peacemakers, planted and nurtured in words and deeds of peace. Each of us who follows Christ can plant these seeds and sow God’s word in our communities and our world. The mission of the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program (PPP) is to help us in our efforts.

Local, national, and international peacemaking efforts are supported by an annual Peacemaking Offering on World Communion Sunday, October 2nd. Local congregations keep 25% of the offering for their own peacemaking projects. Churches in our presbytery have engaged in a variety of imaginative ways to do peacemaking in their congregations and communities. The one-eighth of the offering kept by our presbytery helps to fund the position of our Mission Advocate, provides scholarships to conferences, helps to fund mission trips, and makes it possible for us to host International Peacemakers.

Every church should have received a Promotion Packet. Additional packets and materials can be ordered from Presbyterian Distribution Service at (800) 524-2612. Ask for PDS 12142-11-280. Materials can also be downloaded from the PCUSA website.

CHECK OUT THESE WEBINARS FROM THE INSURANCE BOARD

The Insurance Board presents webinars on a variety of topics to help you protect your church from unnecessary exposure to risk. These webinars are coming up in October:

Building Trust, Preventing Disaster: Financial Controls and Other Insights
10/12/2011 at 11:00 AM *Eastern Time*

Facebook for Your Church -- The Right Way
10/05/2011 at 11:00 AM *Eastern Time*

For more information, go to: www.insuranceboard.org/

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