

The Presbytery of Coastal Carolina

CONNECTIONS Newsletter



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807 W. King St., Elizabethtown, NC 28337

www.presbycc.org

General (Presbyter) Ponderings:

I recently read, as many of you perhaps did as well, a paper written by some pastors from **within** the denomination, that referred to our denomination as deathly ill. The rest of the paper was then devoted to a rather comprehensive plan for resurrecting (resuscitating, recycling, reinventing?) the PC(USA). Well, I appreciate the concern and the sometimes forward looking proposal for revitalization. It was obviously a proposal into which has been given much thought and study and prayer. I must also say, however, that much of it did not seem new or all that creative. There were reflections, at least in my mind, of the ghost of Christmases past, reminding me of a proposal that came a few years ago – that one from **outside** this denomination.

I am not particularly interested here to debate the various ideas about how to pump new life into the church, or about issues that would lead some to believe that PC(USA) is deathly ill. But I would want to challenge the notion that our beloved church is simply limping along with one foot in the grave.

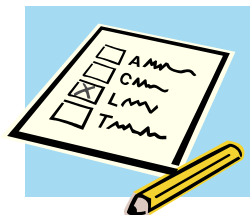
Yes, within this larger family of congregations, we have some members who are dying. We have some that are struggling to accommodate changing times. We have some who are struggling to get along peaceably with other members. **And**, we have the many who are very much alive, focused on growing in grace, and excited to be reaching out in mission to others. As I move around throughout this Presbytery, I see pastors who are preaching the Word, faithful and true. I see congregations, and sessions, and Presbyterian women, and men who are very much alive and active and answering the call to ministry. I see congregations that are growing, just as I see a growing commitment within the Presbytery to new church development and small church revitalization.

Do I always agree with everything that is said and acted out in behalf of the PC(USA)? Probably not. Am I always as respectful or patient toward those whose points of view – theologically and otherwise – are different from my views? Well, I'm working on that. But mostly, I'm trying to listen for the footsteps in the garden. Assuming that God has not given up on us yet; assuming that God still has important things in mind for PC(USA), and for the Presbytery of Coastal Carolina; assuming that God is still very much at work among us and through us – sometimes chastising, sometimes leading us on, I will refuse to believe that overall, as a PC(USA) family, we are deathly ill.

God is Good!

- David Walker

Special Presbytery Meeting for Amendments Vote—and Discussion Opportunities



At the October meeting of Presbytery, a Special Meeting was approved, to be held on **March 26, 2011**. This meeting is for the purpose of considering and voting on the various proposed (by the 2010 General Assembly) amendments to the constitution.

The location of the meeting is Elizabethtown Presbyterian Church, 800 W. Broad St. 28337.

Find links to all the amendments on Presbytery's homepage—www.presbycc.org or call the Presbytery office (800-277-7479) for copies of the three amendment booklets.

Coastal Carolina's Partnership Visit to Tabasco—

As part of an eight person contingent that traveled to Tabasco, Mexico last month, I must admit that I was more than a little apprehensive. This anxiety was not only



caused by traveling to a foreign country, but also to one that has frequently been in the news recently for its extreme drug-related violence. That apprehension did not abate as we landed in Villahermosa, Mexico. As we exited our plane and walked along the tarmac towards the Customs office, policemen with assault rifles and drug sniffing dogs made their presence known. Finally, after getting through Customs we were greeted by some familiar faces. Francisco, Daniel, and several others from the Presbyterio de Gulfo greeted us with bright smiles and loving embraces as they welcomed us to their homeland.

After loading up into a van, we were off to one of the many Presbyterian churches in Comalcalco, where a welcome meal had been prepared in our honor. As we pulled into the church parking area, we were met by 20-30 church members (men, women and children) who had been waiting patiently for our arrival. They were just as bright and cheerful as Francisco and Daniel had been. Then I looked down at my watch and realized that it was almost midnight. I was awed by their willingness to greet eight complete strangers with open arms and loving hearts. That was pretty much the theme of our entire week. Hundreds and hundreds of people opened their hearts and their homes to a small group of Americans without any reservations or concerns of who we were, what we looked liked or what our thoughts of them might be. They understood as we did, that it was God who brought us all together.

Working side by side with our Mexican brothers and sisters in Tabasco, breaking bread with them, and experiencing their culture first-hand was not only an eye-opening experience but a heart-opening one as well. Witnessing their love and dedication to God, church, and each other will forevermore be emblazoned on my heart.

Making this trip was not easy. Each of us had different road blocks to get around and obstacles to overcome in order to spend a week doing whatever we could to help build the Jose Coffin Sanchez Medical Clinic and to spread Christian love from the Coastal Carolina Presbytery. Sacrifices had to be made not only by each of us, but by each of our families as well. The easier course would have been to ignore God's call and slip back into our daily routines.

This trip also required each of us to step out of our comfort zone. Much like Moses and Noah, we too, had to put ourselves on the proverbial island and accept all the circumstances and situations that God put us in. After the journey had ended, I think we all came out of the experience blessed by becoming closer to our new Mexican friends, each other, and, most importantly, to God Himself.



- submitted by Kenny Fore, Old Laurel Hill PC



Sharing Resources, Changing Lives—

Since 1949, Presbyterians have joined with millions of other Christians through [One Great Hour of Sharing](#) to share God's love with people experiencing need. Our gifts support ministries of disaster response, refugee assistance and resettlement, and community development that help people find safe refuge, start new lives and work together to strengthen their families and communities.

Where does the money go? The Presbyterian Hunger Program receives 36% of undesignated gifts, while Self-Development of People and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance each receive 32%.

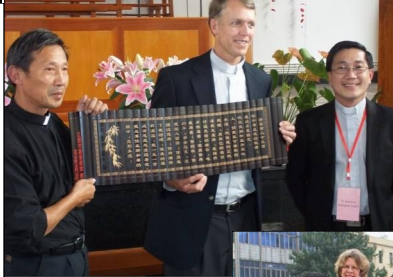
When is the offering received? Most congregations receive the offering on Easter Sunday, Palm Sunday or both. Find promotional materials at the link above.

On Presbytery's web site you can find the following forms/handbooks/resources:



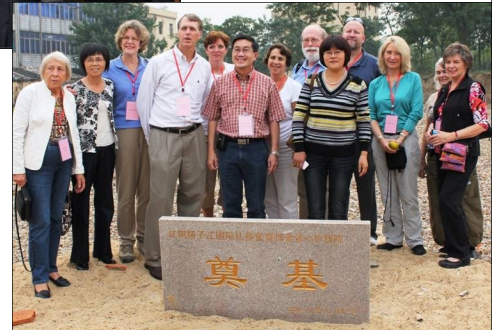
- (1) Clerk of Session Handbook
- (2) Check list for Session Minutes
- (3) Nomination form for serving on Presbytery Committees
- (4) Financial forms and information - www.presbycc.org/forms/.
- (5) A Research Catalog Search engine for the Resource Centers database. www.presbycc.org/resources/

First Presbyterian Church, Wilmington & The Church in China



First Presbyterian Church has had a long relationship with Christians in China, one that has developed in three stages—contact, reconnection, and partnership. Over a hundred

years ago, in 1895, George and Emma Chadborn Worth became medical missionaries in China and helped establish the Jiangyin mission.



In 1951, the Jiangyin mission closed under pressure from the Chinese Communist government. Since 1979, however, official tolerance for religious groups in China has improved.

In 2007, Rev. Ernie Thompson, together with Alex Munroe and Fred Butler, Jr., and Lucy Worth, granddaughter of George Worth, accepted an invitation to go to China and visit Jiangyin. This visit provided the basis for the reconnection of First Presbyterian with the congregation in Jiangyin.

In 2010 another delegation from First Presbyterian visited China, talking with church leaders, visiting Protestant seminaries and meeting students, worshipping with old friends in Jiangyin, and sharing stories of faith and life. Strengthening the relationship between the church in China and in the United States, supporting leadership training for the church in China, and also providing leadership for Presbyterians interested in the Chinese church are areas of involvement which the **China Ministry Team** seeks to promote within the total mission program of First Presbyterian. Shaped by the legacy of its past, our church is excited by the opportunities for the future.

Annual JPC Mother-Daughter Banquet—Jonesboro Presbyterian Church, Sanford, NC will hold their annual celebration of mothers and daughters on March 19, 2011.



The theme this year is "**Women—The Flowers in God's Garden.**" A short musical program will be presented in the sanctuary starting at 5:30pm, followed by a wonderful meal prepared and served by the JPC Men.

Join the Celebration of Life Well-Lived at ...
Presbytery's Senior Adult Picnic
May 21, 2011
11:30 AM—2:00 PM
Elizabethtown Presbyterian Church



Good food (a catered lunch), fellowship and entertainment
All our Outstanding Older Adult Nominees will be recognized.

Make reservations by contacting the Presbytery office.



Ginny Ward Holderness Receives APCE's 2011 Educator of the Year Award

Ginny was named the **Association of Presbyterian Church Educators' 2011 Educator of the Year** at their February conference held in Albuquerque, NM.

Ginny is a certified Christian educator in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). A graduate of the Presbyterian School of Christian Education (now Union Presbyterian Seminary), Ginny is best known for her work in youth ministry, having written seven books. She has taught continuing education courses and been a visiting faculty member for the Extended Campus Program at Union Presbyterian Seminary.

In his introduction of Ginny at the Awards Banquet, Union President Brian Blount said, "Ginny has a wealth of wisdom to share about educational ministries with youth and young adults and the need for effective leadership in a changing church,"

Ginny's focus recently has shifted to adult education, particularly young adults and parents. In her current role as a consultant in Christian education at **First Presbyterian Church, Wilmington, North Carolina**, she particularly enjoys leading the Young Moms Bible Study. Ginny has served churches in Little Rock, AR, Shelby, Concord, Greenville, and Sanford, NC, and Dalton, GA. Ginny is married to Jim Holderness, a Presbyterian pastor.

Helping Hands and Hearts Mission at Graves Memorial Presbyterian Church, Clinton, NC



Graves Memorial Presbyterian has been blessed with a ministry that has created fellowship, new friends, and the opportunity to give some terrific folks a new lease on life. A few years ago our congregation was blessed with a gift to be

used for community ministry. An opportunity came to use the funds when Tim Shankweiler, an industrious new member, announced he wanted to start a project to help folks who were home bound. Tim was introduced to Debbie Martin, a deacon who works for Sampson Home Health, an agency designed to meet the needs of our citizens with medical needs. Together they decided a most helpful one-day project would be to construct wooden ramps to porches.

Debbie began to find folks in Sampson County in need of a ramp and Tim created a design. Once or twice a month on Saturday morning folks from GMPC gather at Lowes to load the wood and build a ramp. Usually most of us don't know the recipient until we meet them on Saturday. The building process usually ends a little after lunch. Tim has 25 or more folks he calls on to saw, drill, cut, transport and make sandwiches. It usually takes 8 to 10 folks to build the ramps so we all get in on the fun.



Ramps are built to strict specs and are constructed to last a life time. At the end of the day, they don't know who has been blessed the most, the owner of a free ramp or the builders whose helping hands have enriched another heart.

Wallace Presbyterian Church Experiences an ALL CHURCH RETREAT— by Lee Baker

“When it rains, it pours” might be a good way to describe the weather for the first Wallace Presbyterian All Church Retreat. But we can assure you that the weather did not dampen our spirits.

Just under 50 people, ranging in age from 5 to 80+ gathered Friday evening February 4 for two days of spiritual growth, fun and relaxation. George Anderson, Senior Minister of Second Presbyterian Church in Roanoke, VA was our excellent retreat leader. His challenging topic was “Parables that Bother Us, Until They Bless Us.”

It all began over a year ago when some of our members began discussing their hope for a church wide retreat. In short order we had formed a retreat committee and reserved the weekend at Trinity Center at Pine Knolls Shores, NC. As this well equipped and beautifully located retreat center books way in advance, we were fortunate to get space, even a year out.

In a way, the rain was a blessing, as the camaraderie we enjoyed in singing around the piano, doing puzzles, playing games or just visiting with each other, contributed to a wonderful sense of community felt by all. We have decided that our first retreat should become an annual event; we’re already booked for 2012 and 2013. Our positive retreat experience certainly recommends an all church retreat for others!



Add the **Presbytery** logo to your bulletin or newsletter! It is found at www.presbycc.org/forms/; there are options for color or black & white.

There are 4 image links which you can use save the image to your computer.



2011 Stewardship GIVING Magazine

— Order your copy of the 2011 *Giving* magazine by calling Presbyterian Distribution Services at (800) 524-2612. (Shipping charges apply.) This year’s magazine contains helpful articles as well as planning resources for

the 2011 Stewardship Theme: **Saints Alive: Living Generously,**



Presbyterian Women of the Presbytery of Coastal Carolina

2011 PW Spring Gathering—will be held at Shallotte Presbyterian Church, 5070 M.H. Rourk Drive, Shallotte, NC

Registration begins at 9am; worship at

10am.

The guest speaker will be Rev. Dr. Nancy Gladden who currently serves as Presbytery’s Mission Coordinator for the East Community.

Gifts of Women Sunday was celebrated on February 20th at First Presbyterian Church, Jacksonville by inviting a ministry team from the N.C. Correctional Institution for Women’s Presbyterian Prison Ministry to lead the worship. The executive director, Mary Ray, a Chaplain and several former inmates shared the Prison Ministry’s vision and mission through music and passionate life stories.



What’s NEW with YOUTH —

Youth Quake exploded on January 8th at Raven Rock Presbyterian Church, Lillington. Over 75 youth from 12 churches plus 20 PYC and a bunch of Raven Rock PC helpers enjoyed the fun, food, and worship focused around the **Mad Hatter’s Tea Party** theme. More than 400 hats were collected for children with cancer.



UPCOMING EVENTS:

MARCH 12 –13, 2011—Middle School Retreat—Camp Kirkwood
Theme: “Inflate Your Faith” -
Keynote: Hank Bellany—MacPherson Presbyterian Church, Fay.

MONTREAT YOUTH CONFERENCE—July 17—25, 2011—Contact jenniffermaffia@presbycc.org for more information.



FEASTING on the WORD

COME JOIN THE FEAST!

Introducing a NEW online lectionary curriculum based on the **Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary**—(kindergarten—adult)

Sign up to take part in the FREE SAMPLE SUNDAY— MARCH 20.

Go to feastingontheword.net/curriculum and sign up to receive sample sessions for every age level, including color materials.

Chestnut Street Presbyterian. Wilmington gets historic site designation—

At nearly 145 years old, Chestnut Street Church is North Carolina’s oldest African-American Presbyterian church. Now it has the distinction of becoming the first African-American church to be designated a historic landmark.

A ceremony celebrating this designation was held at 3 p.m., Sunday, February 27 at the church, located at 714 Chestnut St. Wilmington Mayor Pro Tem Earl Sheridan was the keynote speaker.

The church has a rare frame structure and batten with Carpenter Gothic walls, which incorporate paired arch Italianate windows, making it a unique example of Carpenter gothic and Italianate architectural style.

Over the years, Chestnut Street Church has earned its reputation as the “teachers’ church.” “Education has been a part of our legacy and it continues to be a part of our legacy. We are primarily identified as a church of educators,” said the current pastor, Rev. Perry D. Griffin. His vision for the church is “to be a church that has a relevant voice for the issues the community faces.”