



Presbyterian Women

Plans proceed for second Big Tent event

2011 gathering set for June 30-July 2 in Indianapolis

Presbyterian News Service

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by [Bethany Furkin](#)

LOUISVILLE

The second Big Tent event will follow much the same format as 2009's inaugural gathering, but will include some new conferences.

At the first Big Tent, held in Atlanta in June 2009, 10 conferences of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) met concurrently, allowing participants to attend workshops and meet people from different areas of the denomination.

The 2011 event, held June 30-July 2 in Indianapolis, will do the same.

"You won't get a chance to see as many parts of the church in one place as you will at Big Tent," said Kerry Rice, manager of the General Assembly meeting service. Rice was speaking to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, meeting here Oct. 27-29.

Two groups that had conferences at the 2009 event — Presbyterian Health Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA)

and Stewardship and Investment — will not participate in the second Big Tent, Rice said.

However, three new groups will be at the 2011 event:

World Mission will host its Mission Celebration, last held in Cincinnati in 2009;

The Clergy Women's Leadership Institute, hosted by Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries/Presbyterian Women; and

The National Black Presbyterian Caucus, which will be part of the Racial Ethnic and Immigrants Convocation

Groups from 2009 that will also be at the 2011 event:

Healthy Ministries Conference

Presbyterian Communicators Network Conference

National Multicultural Church Conference

Evangelism and Church Growth

National Elders Conference

Peacemaking Conference

Racial Ethnic and Immigrants Convocation

Pathways, a theological and practical training program for youth leaders and youth grades 9-12, will also be meeting in Indianapolis at the same time as Big Tent, enabling participants of both conferences to worship together.

Two of three Big Tent preachers have been determined: The Rev. J. Herbert Nelson, director of the Office of Public Witness in Washington, and the Rev. Serene Jones, president and professor at Union Theological Seminary in New York.

Organizers are anticipating 1,600-1,700 participants at the 2011 Big Tent. They hope to have an event webpage by the end of the year and to open registration by February. Registration is \$285, the same as the 2009 fee.

Inside this issue:

From the Moderator	2
Moderator Election	3
Civil Unions and Christian Marriage	3
PC USA Response to Arizona Immigration Law	4

Dates of Interest:

- **November 15:** Mission Pledge Forms Due to: Michele Simmons, Moderator
- **November:** Collect and Dedicate Thank Offering
- **December 10:** Send Thank Offering and Quarterly Mission Pledges to: Joyce Winkler, Treasurer

Presbyterian Women of Coastal Carolina

October 26, 2010

The “busy season of the church” is now beginning. There are homecomings being celebrated, fall festivals being held, and plans being made for Thanksgiving and Advent. Amidst all this activity, Presbyterian Women are continuing to **study the Bible, hold general meetings, support PW through the Mission Pledge, and complete mission activities** in their communities. Please pray for all the women as we continue to work through both PW and our local congregations to do the work God has for us to do.

With Thanksgiving just around the corner, it is now time to begin collecting and dedicating the **Thank Offering**. In February 2010, the Creative Ministries Offering Committee of Presbyterian Women approved grants totaling **\$870,058** from the **2009 Thank Offering** of Presbyterian Women. **Thirty-one projects** were chosen from 84 proposals — **16 national** and **15 international**. At least **40 percent** of the Thank Offering funds go to health-related projects. The program receiving a grant from our synod was **MedAssist of Mecklenburg**—a community pharmacy awarded **\$25,000** to open a second location to purchase medications for families with low incomes. As a reminder, the Thank Offering is a PW offering collected in the fall of each year that gives women a tangible way to express their gratitude for the special blessings in their lives. Please pray, as we all begin to give, that God will multiply our giving and direct the funds according to His will.

Leadership training for PW leaders from each synod was held on September 24-26 at the **Gay-**



Lord Palms Hotel in Orlando, FL. Since this is the site of the **2012 Church wide Gathering** of PW, about **55** of us in attendance were able to get a taste of what is to come at the gathering. The theme for the event was “**Takin’ It To the Congregations**” and that is the goal of the training. Each attendee was able to attend two of four leadership workshops led by two outstanding Presbyterian pastors, **Rev. Virstan Choy and the Rev. Sarah Moore-Noke**. In addition, we participated in various activities that challenged each of us and encouraged us to think outside of the box. Our leadership team from the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic is already hard at work getting out the information to the congregations in our areas. Each **local PW Moderator** in our presbytery should be receiving a **survey** from their Regional Communicator in regards to leadership training. Please make sure these are completed and returned so we can begin to develop training programs for the local PW groups in our presbytery. I will be serving as the Leadership Trainer for Coastal Carolina, New Hope, The James, and Eastern Virginia. Please pray for all of us on the synod leadership training team, as we travel, that we follow God’s will in training each and every local PW group as He would have us do.

Looking at our PW purpose this quarter we focus on our fourth commitment: **“and witnesses to the promise of God’s kingdom.”** As PW continues to study the journey of hope we find in Revelation through the *Horizons* Bible study, we are

each reminded of the wonderful promise of God’s kingdom. We should not stop at just remembering. Each of us has the responsibility of living lives that serve as witnesses to God’s promise of living in eternity with Him. We should each be lights shining in a dark and hopeless world. Each of us should be joyful in knowing our future is secure and we should desire to tell others how they too can receive such joy and security. As Peter states, **“Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”**

(1 Peter 1: 8-9) Pray that each woman takes that joy and shares it with the world, shining her light for all to see!

Respectfully Submitted,

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Moderator Election

With an unusually large number of contentious issues on the agenda, the 219th General Assembly (2010) — with the theme “Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water” (John 7:38) — could have been a stormy crossing. That it wasn’t is a tribute to the spirit of civility and unity that predominated among the 712 commissioners and 200 advisory delegates who diligently adhered to their commissions “to discern the mind of Christ.”

They were also well-served by two calm and competent leaders — Moderator Cynthia Bolbach and Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons. While no Assembly produces consensus on many issues, the 219th General Assembly demonstrated Presbyterian governance at its best — elders, ministers and advisers worshipping, laughing, praying,

singing, studying, debating and navigating potentially treacherous waters together to seek the best way forward for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Bolbach, an elder from National Capital Presbytery, was elected moderator opening night (July 3) on the fourth ballot. She was the only elder in the field of six candidates. Bolbach employed brief answers and a winsome sense of humor to steadily gain ground, rising from 149 votes (30%) of the votes on the first ballot to 325 votes (53%) on the decisive fourth ballot. None of the other five candidates — the Rev. Julia Leeth of Santa Barbara Presbytery, the Rev. James Belle of Philadelphia Presbytery, the Rev. Maggie Lauterer of Western North Carolina Presbytery, the Rev. Eric Nielsen of Northern Waters Presbytery, and the Rev. Jin S. Kim of host Twin



*Newly elected Moderator Cynthia Bolbach.
—Photo by Danny Bollin*

Cities Area Presbytery — exceeded 23% of the vote on any ballot. Bolbach’s running mate for vice-moderator, the Rev. Landon Whitsitt, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Liberty, MO (Heartland Presbytery) was installed later in the week.

Civil Unions and Christian Marriage

The Assembly voted to maintain the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s current definition of marriage as “between a man and a woman.” In voting 439–208 to approve the report of its Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage, the Assembly turned back several overtures seeking to change the constitutional definition of marriage in the Directory for Worship to “two people.”

The report calls for further discussion of issues around the church’s understanding of marriage and same-sex unions and the development of resources that will help guide presbyteries, sessions and ministers, particularly in states that have legalized gay marriage. The Assembly also voted to send to the churches a minority report that defends what its supporters call a more



The Rev. Rick Nutt, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Civil Union and Marriage Issues, confers with committee assistant the Rev. Carol McDonald and resource coordinator the Rev. Vernon Broyles. —Photo by Danny Bollin

“traditionalist” stance against any sexual relations outside heterosexual mar-

riage.

The Assembly voted 366–287 to urge the Board of Pensions to extend the same spousal and dependent benefits to same-gender domestic partners as it does to married plan members. It also approved an increase in BOP pension dues of up to 1 percent, effective Jan. 1, 2012, to cover the cost of the additional benefits. To address concerns that the added benefit would create a moral dilemma for some church employers, the resolution includes a provision urging the BOP to create a “relief of conscience” fund to segregate dues of employers who are conscientiously opposed to same-gender benefits. The Board has a similar provision for employers who object to their dues being used to pay for abortion procedures.



PRESBYTERY OF COASTAL CAROLINA

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*Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has
been pleased to give you the kingdom.
Luke 12:32*

The PC (USA) Response to Arizona Immigration Law

Questions and Answers

What did the Assembly do?

The 219th General Assembly (2010) amended and approved a commissioner's resolution that calls for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

“refrain from holding national meetings at hotels in those states where travel by immigrant Presbyterians or Presbyterians of color or Hispanic ancestry might subject them to harassment due to legislation similar to Arizona Law SB 1070/HB2162”;

“offer nonfinancial support for the creation of accompaniment programs to support persons of color who feel that they are at risk when attending church-sponsored

worship or programs” in congregations and camp & conference facilities;

Encourage camps & conference centers in Arizona and other states that pass similar laws to “develop ‘sanctuary’ responses that would create safe places for all participants” ...; and

Develop educational and legal resources for congregations through the PC(USA) office of immigration. The vote was 420-205, with 18 abstentions.

What does it mean?

The PC(USA) will now refrain from holding national meetings in the state of Arizona, and will monitor the progress of similar legislation to

Arizona Law SB 1070/HB2162 that is currently being considered in seventeen other states (as of June 23, 2010). As directed by this assembly, the PC(USA) will refrain from holding national meetings in states that pass such copycat legislation.

What's next?

Steps will begin to develop the programs and resources that are detailed in the assembly action.

Where can I get more information?

<http://pc-biz.org/Explorer.aspx?id=3587>
www.pcusa.org/immigration