



The Grapevine

CONNECTING THE CONGREGATIONS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF DETROIT

January/February 2006

Moving Worship And Installation Service Energizes Presbytery

It was a moving experience – spiritually and physically. Worship at the January Meeting of the Presbytery got God’s frozen chosen to loosen up a bit with swaying bodies, and hand clapping and foot tapping in response to the stirring leadership of the talented musicians and Moderator The Rev. Fran Hayes. But the Presbytery was also encouraged and led to move more deeply into the working of God’s Spirit within us through the devotional leading of the Taize portions of the Worship Service.

Our Worship together clearly addressed us, and allowed us as God’s people to praise God physically, emotionally and spiritually. We not only shared the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, but we had an opportunity to live the Sacrament together.

This experience was a profound setting for the Moderator, Fran Hayes, and the Vice Moderator, Dixie Elam, to take their vows as the incoming leadership of Presbytery.



Left to right: The Rev. Fran Hayes, Moderator; The Rev. Dr. Allen D. Timm, Executive Presbyter; Elder James Shirley, Immediate Past Moderator; Elder Dixie Elam, Vice Moderator.

Black History Month

Corretta Scott King's Death Sets Somber and Serious Tone for Black History Month

Her husband's words certainly could be said and shouted and prayed on the occasion of Corretta Scott King's death on January 31. "Free at Last. Free at last. Praise the Lord, I'm free at last."

But we are the less for having lost Corretta Scott King's impressive dignity and determination in the cause of not only racial justice, but also the human rights. A powerful presence of support for her husband's civil and human rights causes, upon his death, Corretta took up the cause with deep conviction and a "we shall not be moved" spirit, that helped move the cause of civil rights forward.

The loss of two tremendous leaders, Rosa Parks and Corretta Scott King, helps underscore the fact that every Christian, every American, bears responsibility now for fulfilling the emancipation

"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed - we hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal.

This will be the day, this will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning "My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring!"

And when this happens, when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every tenement and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last, free at last. Thank God Almighty, we are free at last." Martin Luther King, Jr.

MISSION SUPPORT COMMITMENT DEDICATION AT FEBRUARY PRESBYTERY MEETING

It is now more important than ever for churches to turn in their 2006 Mission Support Information and Pledges by the February Meeting of Presbytery.

At the February Meeting all churches that have completed their 2006 Mission Support Forms will be asked to have a representative publicly present their Forms in a ceremony of commitment to our common mission as God’s People – The Presbytery of Detroit.

General Assembly Moderator, Elder Rick Ufford-Chase visits Detroit Presbytery March 12, 2006

9:00 Am Kirk In The Hills, Bloomfield Hills, in the Sanctuary
11:00 AM St. John's, Detroit
1:00 PM—2:30 PM Lunch at Fort Street, Detroit, Reservations to 313-961-4533.

MODERATOR'S MUSINGS

These are stormy times in the life of the church and in the world. There are many who are afraid for the future of their congregations, afraid that divisive issues will tear our beloved Presbyterian church apart, afraid for the future of Christ's church in a secular culture. So I think the picture of the church as disciples in a boat, being tossed about on a stormy sea, (Matt. 14) is as apt a symbol for us today as it was in the early days of the church. Like the first disciples, we struggle with faith issues. We too are afraid sometimes and have a hard time seeing Jesus in the midst of the storm.

During the storms of life, the Church has been called repeatedly to struggle with difficult theological issues and to discern God's will anew. We now look back in history and recognize the misinterpretations of scripture that sanctioned slavery and the subordination of women. Through the process of repentance, changing our minds, and correcting our practice, the church makes

faithful progress and moves into the future.

Whether we're struggling with issues related to sexuality or divestment or trying to discern what the church is called to be and do, it can be painful and scary! But like the early disciples, when we listen attentively over the noise of the storm, we can hear Jesus calling to us, reassuring us, and telling us, "Don't be afraid." We have Christ's promise that he will always be with us, and that the Holy Spirit will guide us and empower us with whatever we need to carry out the mission of the church.

As brothers and sisters in Christ in the Presbytery of Detroit, we are all in the boat together. In the midst of the storm, let us keep our eyes on Jesus and keep our ears tuned to hear his word to us. Let us stay focused on embodying Christ to one another and to the world. Let us encourage and pray for one another. Salam...shalom...peace be with you all. The Rev. Fran Hayes

Rave Reviews for Church Leadership Seminar

By Joan Hanpeter

Nearly 170 lay leaders and pastors attended a stimulating and fun experience at the Leadership Seminar on Jan. 28 at First Birmingham. The evaluations from the Seminar have unanimously rated it as outstanding.

Workshop leaders and participants came from all over the Presbytery to learn from 24 workshops offered in four time slots. The educational program was enriched by inspiring worship led by Rev. L.P. Jones and supported by young interpretive dancers from Calvary Detroit, an extensive Cokesbury bookstore, and time for sharing over a delicious lunch.

All workshops were well attended, but, interestingly, the most popular was New, Creative, Inexpensive Ideas for Churches facilitated by Brenda Jarvis. What is the message here? Others with high attendance were Book of Order Matters, Preparing to Serve on a Presbytery Committee, Relationships—Pastors and the Laity, Caring for Your Pastor, Conducting a Productive Meeting, and Resources for Resolving Conflicts.

One of the most unique workshops was targeted at pastors, Preaching Resources, presented by Jonathan Roach, librarian at ETS. Each pastor was able to work off of a computer and this opened the door to an amazing array of sources for fast research.

The message that came through on the evaluations was—"we appreciate and enjoy sharing ideas and concerns with leaders from other churches."



Left: Elder Adrienne Adams, Detroit, Calvary, joins Elders Don and Ermagene McSwain, Detroit, Calvary, in preparing new elders to serve. Right: AEP Brenda Jarvis talks about new developments in ministry.



First Presbyterian Church Honored for Ministry to Disabled Children

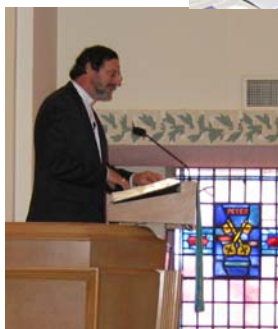
First Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Mich., has been selected to receive a new national award for effective ministry to persons with developmental disabilities and their families. The award is given by Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education (Union-PSCE.)

The church has received The James Goodpasture Award for Ministry with Special Populations, which recognizes congregations that have demonstrated excellence in ministry. This is the first year that the Goodpasture Award has been presented to a congregation. The church received an award of \$1,000 to assist in its ministry.

First Presbyterian Church was recognized for Celebration Station, a specially designed church school class for children with disabilities, which include Autism, Down syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, and other developmental disabilities. Seeking to link the faith community to families with special needs, two professionals and a dozen volunteers welcome these children and adapt the weekly lesson for each child.

This church-wide effort has grown from serving one family to serving 12 families. The only Christian education program like it in the area, other churches have recently expressed interest in beginning similar programs.

Right: Jonathan Roach, Director of the Library at Ecumenical Theological Seminary, presents on-line resources for preaching.



Left: The Rev. Dr. LP Jones challenges participants with Jesus' words to new officers, "Come and See."

Presbytery and Presbyterian Churches respond to Gulf Coast Recovery Effort

In addition to the Presbytery Team that went to the Gulf Coast in Nov., a number of Detroit Presbyterian Churches have and are planning to send Mission Teams. According to eye witness reports and information from the office of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance there will be an ongoing need for clean up and reconstruction efforts and volunteers for months and even years to come. Already reconstruction teams have been going to Florida to help with efforts there to recover from storms in 2004



Elder Mike Raymond, Calvin East Presbyterian Church, Detroit, wires the new appliances for Jefferson Avenue Presbyterian Church's Katrina House.

Souper Bowl Efforts make Good out of Super Bowl Extravagance

Long before Mitch Albom had the wonderful idea of making something good out of the extravagances of the NFL's Super Bowl – and he is to be commended for his suggestion of contributions to the Detroit Mission – Presbyterians made Super Bowl Sunday into Souper Bowl Event.

A Presbyterian Youth Group in South Carolina, some 20 years ago offered the idea of collecting donations for Hunger Programs in soup bowls at worship on Super Bowl Sunday. The idea grew and grew and now religious groups of all kinds have joined those Presbyterian Youth in Souper Bowl Sunday, raising millions of dollars on Super Bowl Sunday that are given to local Hunger Programs.

It's a notion, once put in motion that has become movement of goodness and grace.

Presbytery Panel on Divestment Opens New Dialogue

A panel composed of the Rev. Hani Abdulmasih, a Palestinian Lutheran pastor and Hasan Newash, head of the Palestinian office in Dearborn, Rabbi Herbert Yoskowitz at Adat Shalom, Farmington Hills, Sharona Shapiro, Executive Director of the American Jewish Committee in Michigan, and two representatives of the Presbyterian community, came together to share their concerns, hurts and hopes for peace in Palestine/Israel.

Carol Hylkema, chair of the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee (MRTI), began the discussion by giving a summary of the committee's deliberations and the process for making recommendations to this year's General Assembly.

Comments overheard: "The Christian community in Palestine/Israel is slowly dying in its place of birth, does the rest of the Christian world care?" (Rev. Abdulmasih);

"We support democratic discussion and encourage and are prepared to engage in serious conversations that would help bring peace" (Sharona Shapiro);

"We must deal, seriously, with the suffering of both peoples and work together to change attitudes" (Rabbi

Yoskowitz);

"The Palestinian people still see the Israeli military as an occupation force"

There was a genuine expression on the part of both Palestinian and Jewish members of the panel, that, despite many obstacles on all sides, we must work together in strengthening each other's communities, towards the goal of a just peace in the Holy Land. Presbytery's sponsoring of this event offers a model for dialogue as one way to live together as we struggle to do just that.

Whether the General Assembly agrees to divest, or not, this year, may have less influence, however, on the still unresolved basic issues, than the political and other unknown factors that still lie ahead.

Copies of Ron Stockman's paper, and remarks made by Sharona Shapiro, are available via your email address, by calling Bill Gepford (313-933-4086, church office) Also, Bill is ready to work with any congregation interested in following up with a similar presentation. Finally, the task force, planning this event and coordinated by Helen Morrison, wishes to thank presbytery for its cooperation in making this educational moment in the life of the presbytery possible.

REACHING OUT 2006

On April 28 and 29, 2006, First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham is hosting Reaching Out, 2006: Peace, Mission and Justice in the Western Hemisphere." **Kathryn Baker, PW (USA)** will present the keynote address. Three workshop sessions will allow participants to select workshops on issues such as "Self-development of People: Economic Growth as a Peacemaking Tool" and "Free Trade Agreements and the Michigan Economy" as well as "Everyday Choices with Global Impact" and "More Than Band-Aids: Issues for Medical Mission." Saturday's program will include a plenary session by a Church World Service speaker on "Ware: A Gift and a Right." Please plan to join us as we examine how we in Michigan can promote mission, justice and peace in faraway places with our actions at home. See website: <http://fpcbirmingham.org> for registration information.

THE COVENANT

GATHERING

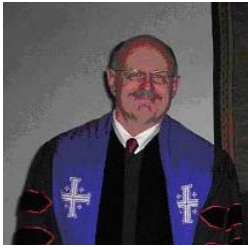
(formerly Synod School) is a great opportunity for individuals and families to share spiritual fellowship and unique learning experiences in a beautiful, natural setting - and at a very reasonable cost!

This year Covenant Gathering will be held at Camp Westminster on Higgins Lake in central Michigan the week of June 19-24 (arrive on Monday and depart on Saturday). In addition to workshops for adults and age-specific groups for children and youth, there will be mission activities and recreation for all ages. The camp setting provides for many outdoor activities including hiking and a lakefront beach. Housing is in cabins, a nearby conference center, and area motels.

The 2006 theme is: "We Are the Body." Look for registration materials in February through your presbytery office.

Acts 16:5 Initiative

By The Rev Dr. Allen D. Timm, Executive Presbyter



During the past year the Congregational Life ministry Team has considered how to help churches strengthen their ministry. The

Team has decided to offer a program to the presbytery called Acts 16:5, led by the Rev. Dr. Stan Ott, of the Vital Church Institute, and Head of Staff of the Pleasant Hills Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh. The program highlights a verse from the record of the Acts of the early church, "So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they grew in number daily." (Acts 16:5, RSV)

Stan Ott has been involved in helping churches find renewal for a number of years. He was being asked by a number of churches to share the pointers of church organization and growth that are outlined in his book, Twelve Dynamic Shifts for Transforming Your Church (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2002). He was getting more requests than he could handle. That led him to hear God's call to work with churches in groups within presbyteries, so he could reach more churches, and so that the churches would engage in the process over a longer period of time. By being with a group of leaders from other churches, there would

also be support. The pastors who are involved also support each other during the process. The program has proved effective in churches of all races and theological identity.

There is an opportunity to hear about the program. Before Presbytery, at 3 PM, on February 28, Stan Ott will explain the program and what participating churches will be expected to do and what they will hope to accomplish. This will take place at the Grosse Ile Church at 3 PM.

Stan will return to town May 4,5 for a two-day workshop that is an introduction and kick-off to the program. Each church brings the pastor and four or five elders, who during the weekend review the purpose of their church, and what they can do to strengthen the ministry and program of the church. This will take place at Dearborn, First Presbyterian Church. After the workshop, if the church decides to continue with the program, the church will take home assignments for information gathering and decision-making.

Those churches that continue will proceed with a two-year process of congregational transformation. The change will take place internally and externally, in the congregation and its mission. The churches will experience a shift from looking at the congregation's hopes, to discovering God's hope for the church, including a mission and a

purpose. The churches will shift from a mindset of maintenance to a plan to advancing a vision. The church will shift from trying to be friendly to opening its doors in hospitality where people enter relationships with members. Churches will shift from assuming people become disciples of Christ, to developing a plan for the growth of its members. The church will focus on developing leaders who can mobilize ministry and develop adequate support for its ministries.

Being as skeptical as I am about quick fixes for anything, I called four Executive Presbyters who have hosted the program. What I heard is that churches, which engage in this two-year process, are blessed with new, transforming ministry that makes them effective outposts for the work of Christ. These churches have grown in their ministries in ways that they never expected. I urge you to take this opportunity to your session and to send a representative or two to the pre-presbytery meeting to explore this opportunity. It is my hope that if you haven't engaged in the process of review of your mission and your strategy for growing in strength and in witness for Jesus Christ, you will join up with this process.

Are We Making Progress? An Editorial Observation.

The debate on the proposed overture to the General Assembly on developing Book of Order procedures to allow consensus decision making displayed both strongly held views on both sides of the issue, but also, a welcomed civility and decorum in the process of the debate. Was it the topic? Or is there a growing sense of our need to truly be Presbyterian in our conduct of our business, to do things decently and in order. Either way, more power to us in this cause.

Presbytery of Detroit

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Interim Editor David Robertson, Pastor, Orchard Lake During a leave of absence for Editor Jeanne Gerritsen for pressing Church responsibilities, David Robertson has agreed to serve as Interim Editor of the Grapevine. Information can be shared with him at david@olccp.com or info@detroitpresbytery.org