



The Grapevine

CONNECTING THE CONGREGATIONS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF DETROIT

November 2006

What Do We Appreciate? Learning's for the Church from *Appreciative Inquiry*

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



“Appreciative Inquiry transforms organizations into places that are free and alive, where people are eager and filled with positive power, and where the creativity of the whole never ceases to amaze, surprise, and ascend. It enhances organizations’ capacity for positive change.” (Whitney, The Power of Appreciative Inquiry, vii).

Recently Dr. Jill Hudson trained a group of COM members in the use of Appreciative Inquiry. This is a method that came from the Weatherhead School of Management from Case Western Reserve University.

Mark Lau Branson adapted the model of Appreciative Inquiry for the church. Appreciative Inquiry helps a church affirm the best of its past, the strength of its present, and the, perhaps as yet unrealized, hopes for its future.

What is applied to the future offers communities new life and change. Pastors in churches who are using the Acts 16:5 material are familiar with this idea. Who are we not reaching? And what do we have

to offer?

Here is a sampling of Branson’s application of AI questions to the church. The questions are designed to fit a particular church, but they take in four basic areas. Here are the basic questions, from Mark Lau Branson, Memories, Hopes, and Conversations, Bethesda, MD: Alban, 2004.

1. Reflecting on your entire experience at Christ Church, remember a time when you felt the most engaged, alive, and motivated. Who was involved? What did you do? How did you feel? What happened?
2. What are the most important contributions the church has made to our life? When did this happen? Who made a difference? How did it affect you? (this question can branch into three areas by changing the subject or object of the question: relationships, ministry to the community and world, and worship life.)
3. Don’t be humble; this is important information: what are the most valuable ways you

contribute to our church – your personality, your perspectives, your skills, your activities, your character? Give some examples.

4. When have you known the most significant spiritual growth for yourself and the church? When were you growing as a disciple? Think about lessons about beliefs or steps of faith. Tell how this has happened. What made a difference? Who was most helpful?
5. What are the essential, central characteristics or ways of life that make your church unique?
6. Make three wishes for the future of the church. Describe what the church would look like as these wishes come true. (this question could also branch in to three areas or more like question 2)

These questions can be modified for a session retreat or devotional. They can be used by church staffs or by individuals. COM has consultants who are ready to help your session with this process of building on the best of the past and envisioning the future. If you want more information, I invite you to give me a call.

Sabbath and Practices of Faith

Each of the upcoming Sabbath retreats will focus on a section from Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People, edited by Dorothy C. Bass. Such shared activities to be explored, practiced and reflected upon include Hospitality, Testimony, Discernment, Shaping Communities, Forgiveness, Healing, Honoring the Body, Household Economics, Dying Well and Singing our Lives. The are rooted in Christian faith and tradition and are presented in ways that they may be integrated into everyday life to give depth and meaning.

Dates for the retreats at Skyline Center at Almont, Michigan are September 17-18, October 15-16, November 19-20, December 17-18, January 21-22, February 18-19, March 18-19, April 15-16, and May 20-21. See the flyer on the Presbytery’s web site or call the Skyline Office (248-644-2040) for more information and to register.

LET THE WONDER BEGIN AGAIN – A PRESBYTERY IN FINANCIAL BALANCE

YES! FAITHFUL GIVING IN THANKS TO GOD AND IN SUPPORT OF THE WORLD WIDE WORK OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, USA DOES WONDERS. AND THE WONDER WE HOPE FOR THIS YEAR IS A BALANCED BUDGET. WITH CONTINUED FAITHFUL FULFILLMENT OF OUR BASIC MISSION SUPPORT PLEDGES, AND GIFTS, WE

WILL REACH OUR GOAL FOR 2006 THANKS BE TO YOU FOR YOUR SHARING

NOTE - ALL GIFTS TO BE CREDITED TO A CHURCH’S 2006 RECORD OF GIVING NEED TO BE IN THE HANDS OF THE PRESBYTERY BY Friday, January 12, 2007 THANK YOU!

MODERATOR'S MUSINGS

According to the polls, a majority of Americans agree that Christmas is too materialistic. Yet it's easy to get caught up in the shopping, wrapping, and piles of presents that the culture promotes as the meaning of Christmas. Each year I feel the tension of living in the world, feeling called to be not "of the world." I struggle to find ways to celebrate Christmas that are more fully reflective of my Christian values. The good news is that the seasons of Advent / Christmas / Epiphany offers us an opportunity to reflect on the wonder and mystery of the Incarnation—how "the Word became flesh and came to live among us...full of grace and truth." Our Christian faith calls us to an alternative way of being in the world and to "a more excellent way" of being in

community. During the season of Advent, we are called to wait and watch in hopeful expectation and prepare the way of the Lord. Let us meditate on prophetic words that speak longingly of God's peaceful Kingdom where all God's creatures live together and where no one will hurt or destroy (Isaiah 11). May we rejoice with Mary in God's faithfulness and with the shepherds hear the message of "peace on earth."

I hope that we will treasure all the things of the holy season and ponder them in our hearts so that our lives may be transformed. Likewise, I hope that our life together as congregations and as a presbytery will be transformed. As we struggle with the challenges of being the church in this time and with the issues that threaten to divide us, may we take heart with Mary, knowing that "nothing will be impossible with God." In all we say and

do, may we seek to follow Christ's way of self-giving love, humility, and forgiveness, rather than to follow our own agendas. Rather, may we seek to be faithful together and to discern God's will for us. As the Presbytery of Detroit, blessed and challenged by great diversity, may we embody God's love so that "they'll know we are Christians by our love."

My prayer for us this holy season is that we may take the time to wonder at the amazing grace of God-with-us and breathe in the mystery of the Incarnation. Then, with Mary, may we open ourselves to give birth to God's plan for our lives: "Here am I, the servant of the Lord. Let it be with me according to your word."

In Christian love,
Fran Hayes, Moderator

COMMENTARY - PRESBYTERY CONTINUES TO SEEK FAITHFUL PROCESS FOR ORDINATION EXAMINATIONS

We knew it wouldn't be easy. We hoped, and prayed, that it would not be disorderly or unnecessarily confusing or daunting for candidates or commissioners. But the result of the Peace Unity and Purity adopted recommendations at General Assembly in June, as they impact the process of examinations for

ordination, is at best very mixed based on the experience of the October Presbytery meeting.

In spite of the best efforts to date by the Stated Clerk and the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, there still is confusion about what is now required in the examination process. Conversations continue with the Clerk, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, and the Committee on Ministry to the end that we will find ways to carry out the mandate from General Assembly for increased care

and rigor in the examination process, but with a clear understanding that the process will be marked by decency and order.

Stated Clerk Ed Koster will again outline for the Presbytery his understanding of the process and of the proper method and content in carrying out the examinations. For information on the status of the current recommendations you can go to www.pydetroit.org and look under the section Resource Documents.

- The Editor

2006 Alma Youth Mix

The Alma Youth Mix was touching, fun, spirit filled, and a really good time.. Our keynote speaker was David Bailey. David spoke to us about "Where Are We Going?" leading from Acts 22 to a place where we ask, "God what now? Where do you want me to go and what do you want me to do?" The Detroit Youth Mix website will have the pod casts of David's messages by the end of December, along with the small group sessions and the power point presentation of pictures and music from the 2006 Youth Mix, the address for that website is <http://youthmixdetpresby.com/>

and David told us that he would also post the pod cast recorded at the youth mix to his website which is <http://www.davidmbailey.com>. Along with the keynote address we had small group time, free time where we were able to go to the Alma football game, do the climbing wall, play soccer, watch movies, or just rest and get to know other youth and youth leaders in our Presbytery. The youth mix for 2007 is scheduled for November 9—11. Also remember that Triennium is July 17—22, 2007 and look for registration information in the next couple of months.



Clockwise from Above: David Bailey; Energizer "Roll to Me"; Design Team with David Bailey; and Ultimate Twister



Katrina Relief Mission Trip - November 4-12, 2006 - Pearlinton, MS

By Sue Kage and Andy King

What do you say to someone who has lost all of his or her worldly possessions? We in our comfortable homes and surroundings cannot even begin to imagine the depth of despair many folks who survived Katrina have endured. Even now fourteen months later most of the areas hardest hit by the eye of the storm are still decimated. Still in all the pain and suffering Mrs. Rawls, the wife of the Baptist Minister in Pearlinton, exclaimed, "If it weren't for Katrina you all would not be here in fellowship with us tonight. What a blessing!" Pearlinton, Mississippi, residents made us feel like physical, emotional, and spiritual wimps. Boy, did they teach us a lesson on life!

Presbyterian Disaster Relief is a huge part of the rebuilding of Pearlinton, Mississippi with a commitment of at least five years as a permanent site in the community. Pearlinton was a direct hit of Katrina with wave surges of seventeen and a half feet of water. As you can well imagine, the town was washed away and what was left has had to be totally gutted and rebuilt. This was a poor community and now with the destruction of most of the homes many people are living in tiny FEMA trailers, with family, or have left the area all together.

Diving into this, 72 volunteers of the Presbytery of Detroit spent a week as God's hands and feet. At six different homesites, people found themselves roofing, wiring,

drywalling, insulating, painting, plumbing, constructing and/or siding. In addition, some folks spent some time at camp painting, preparing wonderful food for us all, or constructing pods (our living quarters for the week) and new showers. Others spent time obtaining building materials, documenting the week, or overseeing the whole operation. It takes a team of varied talents to make it all work. What a joy it was to meet so many new people from around the Detroit region. 11 churches were represented on the trip, each sending anywhere from one to 25 participants. The sending churches and volunteers were able to raise close to \$10,000 for purchasing construction materials for homeowners unable to buy their own supplies. What a blessing it was to be part of such a wonderful event.

Please consider participating in our next trip to Pearlinton, March 10-18, 2007. If you are unable to go, please consider sending a donation for homeowner building supplies to the Presbytery offices.

For more information contact Karen Carl at the Presbytery.

P.S. Orchard Lake Community Church, Presbyterian, sent 26 members of its faith community on their third trip as a Church to the Gulf Coast during the week of Thanksgiving. Are there other Churches that have undertaken their own Gulf Coast Mission Trips? Please share your experiences with us all. Contact the editor: david@olccp.com.



Unloading Drywall at Marshall Collins' house.



Marshall Collins Jr. and Sr.



Storm Surge Captured by Security Camera.



Left: Pastor Rawls and Brother Burton at Wednesday Night Service.

THE PRESBYTERY OF DETROIT

26th Annual

**MEN'S ADVENT COMMUNION
BREAKFAST CELEBRATION**

Saturday, December 9, 2006
8:00 A.M. Communion
8:45 A.M. Breakfast
9:30 A.M. Keynote Speaker

Jefferson Avenue Presbyterian Church
8625 Jefferson Avenue
Detroit, MI 48214

COST: \$10.00



SPEAKER:
The Rev. Dr. M. Craig Barnes
Robert Meneilly Professor of Pastoral
Ministry
at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
Pastor and Head of Staff at The
Shadyside Presbyterian Church

For tickets contact the Presbytery Office 866-345-6550

**To: All Clerks, Treasurers, Pastors, and
Polity Workers of all ages!**

TWO TRAININGS!!!
(Special deal—two for the price of one)

Clerk Training

- For clerks, treasurers and everyone
- Saturday, December 2, 2006
- 9-11 am
- Presbytery Office, room 223
- Topics:
 - o What is happening in your church
 - o Annual statistical reports
- Coffee, pastries, good fellowship included.

Records Review Training

- For those interested in special training in preparing minutes, **OR** who are willing to investigate the really exciting work of reading minutes of other churches.
- Saturday, January 6, 2007
- 9-11 am
- Presbytery Office, room 223
- Topics:
 - o Session Minutes Checklist
 - o Reviewer Guidelines
- How to keep and review minutes
- Coffee, pastries, good fellowship included

Helpful Workshops
Explore all kinds of topics.

Meaningful Worship
Receive inspiration for our leadership.

SAVE THE DATE

Church Leadership Seminar



First Presbyterian Church
529 Hendrie Blvd.
Royal Oak, MI 48067

Come for the full day or for half a day.

Presbytery Meeting Dates and Locations for 2007:

Jan 23—Livonia, St. Paul's
Feb 27—Mt. Clemens, First
Apr 24—Southfield, Korean
Jun 26—Detroit, Jefferson Avenue.
Aug 28—Northville, First
Oct 23—Redford, St. James
Nov 27—Detroit, Hope

Great Speakers
Learn from experienced
leaders.

Practical Ideas
Learn about stewardship, new officers,
church strategy, pastoral leadership,
trustee issues, youth, multiculturalism.

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Interim Editor the Rev. Dr. 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

DO YOU HEAR WHAT I HEAR? DO I HEAR WHAT YOU HEAR? DO WE HEAR EACH OTHER? DOES ANYBODY ELSE HEAR US? DO YOU HEAR US?

Would you please take a moment before you leave today to fill out this brief questionnaire? Circle answers - or - where appropriate Please use the back for any additional comments.

1. On a daily basis what is your most frequent source of news and information?

- Newspaper
- Radio
- TV
- Cable
- Blackberry
- Water Cooler
- Other

2. What is your major source for information about the Presbytery of Detroit and what it does in ministry for Christ?

- Email—Weekly Update
- Web Site
- Church Bulletin or Newsletter
- The Grapevine - Detroit Presbytery Newsletter (at Presbytery Meetings, and on the Web)
- The Caucus, an Internet tool
- Other

3. Which of these tools above do you use the most? why?

the least? why?

4. How would you rate the amount and quality of Presbytery communications you receive?

1=High 5=Low

- Email—Weekly Update
- Web Site
- Church Bulletin or Newsletter
- The Grapevine - Detroit Presbytery Newsletter (at Presbytery Meetings, and on the Web)
- The Caucus, an Internet tool
- Other

5. If we could do it - what would be your choice for What and How you would like to receive information about and from the Presbytery.

- First Choice.....
- Second Choice.....
- Third Choice...

6. What concerns or suggestions do you have for us for strengthening the quality and effectiveness of communication in our Presbytery?