

January 27, 2012

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What's Happening in Salem Presbytery

Presbytery Meeting Coming Soon

The next Presbytery Meeting is one week away, on Tuesday, February 7th.
*The snow date is Feb. 14th.

- Location: First Presbyterian Church, 300 N. Cherry Street, Winston-Salem
- Requests for an excused absence should be sent to Laurie Scott at lscott@salem-presbytery.org.
- The packet will be online for printing/downloading on January 31st, by the end of the business day.

Statistical Reports

Has your church completed your Statistical Reports yet? Clerks, as the **February 22nd deadline** approaches, the OGA system will become very slow because of the increased usage. The earlier you enter your data online, the faster the process will be. [Click here for more information on Statistical Reports](#). Questions? Contact Laurie Scott at 336-766-3393 ext. 127 or email her at lscott@salem-presbytery.org.

A Word of Hope: by General-Executive Presbyter Sam Marshall

Long before the words of our faith were written down in the Holy Bible, the people of Israel and Paul's congregations "sang" the faith in song. Long before strife and disagreement over doctrine and rules emerged, faith was simply chanted, sung with joyful hearts in thanksgiving to the God who loves us and created us all.

Sometimes when disagreements over rules and polity and theology emerge, only a song will do. When the United Methodists often gather, a frequent hymn is by Charles Wesley's "And Are We Yet Alive?" (see attached words). In the midst of our own struggles over whether congregations will choose to leave or lessen their ties with Salem Presbytery and the Presbyterian Church USA Wesley's words seem appropriate and hopeful for all of us:

*What troubles have we seen,
what mighty conflicts past,
fights without, and fears within,
since we assembled last!*

*Yet out of all the Lord
hath brought us by his love;
and still he doth his help afford,
and hides our life above. — Charles Wesley*

In spite of all the challenges we face, and the grief and anguish for those on all sides of the issues that divide us, there is still our faith and hope to celebrate that the Church belongs to Jesus Christ. Our journey now may be confusing or disorienting, but we must not lose touch with the songs that lift our hearts to the "sure and certain" hope that "Jesus is Lord! He has been Lord from the beginning. He will be Lord at the end. Even now he is Lord" Perhaps we would all benefit from singing more and talking less.

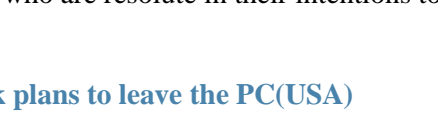
I have two hymns attached to lift your hearts! The Wesley Hymn is in celebration of the joy that we are yet worshipping, witnessing, serving Christ together, in spite of our differences. The second hymn was often sung a-cappella by one of my choir members in the congregation I served in Mississippi, "How Can I Keep from Singing". Time stood still and you could hear a pin drop when she sang that song. The words of the hymn are now in the public domain, and there are many versions, some more secular than others. I have attached the YouTube link for the version by the artist Enya – I apologize that I could not find a more classic hymn version that evoked the same lyrical power to transform the words into music that literally fills a person's heart. Read the hymn version as you hear her sing...artists and versions aside, the major theme is that we are so blessed by God's Grace, how can we not be filled with song? How Can We Keep from Singing? This is the link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBjwOroGNE>

There will be many challenges as we move forward in this new year, budgets, issues, congregations departing. We need to continue our respect for all who are struggling, but even in the midst of that, let us all raise our voices in Thanksgiving to God for Grace and Redemption.

Notes from the PC(USA)

Encouraging churches to remain in the PC(USA)

- Elders' Letter to the Church



With the emergence of the Evangelical Covenant Order of Presbyterians, a statement was issued from our General Assembly Moderator and Vice-Moderator, and some elders from congregations across the USA – encouraging churches to remain within the PCUSA. Please keep all persons on all sides of these issues in your prayers for God's leading us all to be faithful witnesses wherever we are.

-Sam Marshall

Eight Presbyterians, including Cynthia Bolbach and Landon Whitsitt, the moderator and vice-moderator of the 219th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), have issued a letter and video expressing their hope in the future of the denomination. The release comes just a week before the [Fellowship of Presbyterians](#) is to convene a Denominating Conference in Orlando, where that group intends to create a new Reformed body – essentially, a new denomination – to which some congregations currently in the PC (USA) plan to move.

The writers – five teaching elders and three ruling elders, including Jack Haberer, the *Outlook's* editor – met in Chicago Jan. 2 and 3. In the letter posted on a new [blog](#), these Presbyterians acknowledge that the PC(USA) is "feeling the birthpangs of a new church as it is being reformed by the Holy Spirit."

But they contend that the PC(USA) "has not turned its back on proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior."

They also encourage those whose congregations are considering pulling back from the PC(USA) to "insist that your leaders re-expose you to the voices of fellow Presbyterians who are resolute in their intentions to stay."

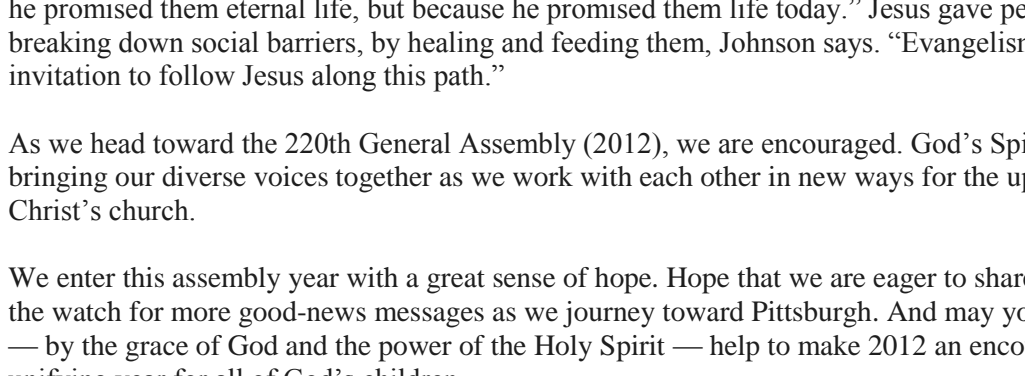
THE LETTER: Eight church elders urge congregations to rethink plans to leave the PC(USA)

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We all know that our denomination, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), is undergoing complex changes as countless people are seeking to follow God's will as they understand it. Recent votes on ordination standards and the revision of the Form of Government have brought a welcome change to some Presbyterians, but to others these changes have felt like a betrayal. We eight elders – whose theological and mission commitments reflect a wide range of the denomination – are writing to those struggling with the recent votes. Our message to you, simply, is to tell you that we love you and want to continue to serve Christ together with you in this part of the body of Christ.

On January 2-3, we gathered together to reflect on these times. The lectionary passage for that day was Eph. 4:1-16, the first part of which calls us to "make an effort to preserve the unity of the Spirit within the bond of peace..." That unity and that peace are suffering strain.

[Click here to read the rest of the letter](#) and here's a link to the [video](#).



Justice and evangelism

To the pastors and congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

At the start of this new year, we bring a special word of thanks and gratitude to each of you for your ongoing support and engagement in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

As the eternal rhythm of the liturgical calendar moves us once again into Ordinary Time, we give thanks to God for the stories we have just retold and heard together. Mary's song. The story of God-with-us. The revelation of God's promise and purpose to the nations of the world.

In these days after Epiphany – as the Holy Spirit calls us to tell the good news of Christ's saving love to all the earth — we remember, too, that because the usual order of the world is overturned in Christ Jesus, we are also called to do justice. And that's really good news. Justice and evangelism are partners, two sides of the same coin.

The newest issue of *Presbyterians Today* is dedicated to that very convergence, with inspiring stories of how God is creating a new church in and through us, and lifting up a movement that is gaining momentum, a vision of helping to birth [1,001 new worshiping communities](#) in the next 10 years. Many of these will look different from what we expect. But remember: the usual order of the world is overturned in Christ Jesus!

In one of the feature stories, "[Justice meets evangelism](#)," Joseph Johnson, pastor of Evergreen Presbyterian Church in Dothan, Ala., says he remembers visiting his grandparents in strife-torn Birmingham in the 1960s and sensing a disconnect between the poverty and racial injustice on the streets and the messages he was hearing in churches.

"In our culture, we've separated justice and evangelism into two disciplines — one about saving souls, the other about filling bellies," he says. "But the way I read Scripture, people didn't follow Jesus just because he promised them eternal life, but because he promised them life today." Jesus gave people hope by breaking down social barriers, by healing and feeding them, Johnson says. "Evangelism should be an invitation to follow Jesus along this path."

As we head toward the 220th General Assembly (2012), we are encouraged. God's Spirit is on the move, bringing our diverse voices together as we work with each other in new ways for the upbuilding of Christ's church.

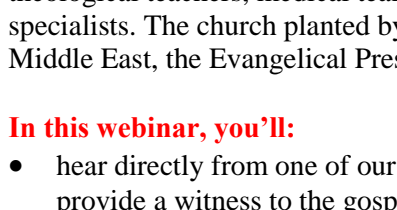
We enter this assembly year with a great sense of hope. Hope that we are eager to share with you. Be on the watch for more good-news messages as we journey toward Pittsburgh. And may your work as leaders — by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit — help to make 2012 an encouraging, upbuilding, unifying year for all of God's children.

Faithfully yours,

Linda Valentine, Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council

Grady Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

News You Can Use



Financial Aid for Studies Announces

Transformational Leadership Debt Assistance

Current loan forgiveness program is revised to reflect church's mission priorities

By Rev. Emily Odom of Salem Presbytery

In the General Assembly Mission Council's ongoing efforts to cultivate missional and entrepreneurial leadership and to support a movement that starts at least [1,001 new worshiping communities](#), the Office of [Financial Aid for Studies](#) has renamed its existing debt assistance program to more clearly express its purpose to relieve pastoral debt and support church growth.

[Transformational Leadership Debt Assistance \(TLDA\)](#), formerly known as the Theological Student Loan program, opened for application on January 16. **Designed to forgive loans to seminary graduates who are serving in temporary and/or part-time pastoral positions in Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations of 150 members or less or in new, emerging worshiping communities, the program's goal is to remove financial barriers to their service.**

"We are pleased to utilize resources entrusted to us to support risk-taking pastors of small, growing communities of faith to further the mission of Christ," said the Rev. Marcia Clark Myers, director of the [Office of Vocation](#), which includes the work of [Financial Aid for Studies](#).

[Read More](#)

PC(USA) Ecumenical News

- **World Council of Churches Stewards Programme 2012**
Young Christians from around the world are invited to apply to the WCC Stewards Programme for a hands-on learning experience at the WCC Central Committee meeting, 23 August - 7 September 2012, in Crete, Greece. Applicants must be between the age of 18-30 years.
- **Call for Prayers Issued as Interfaith Tension Continues in Nigeria**
- **How Engagement with Buddhism Changes Christian Self-understanding**
- **During Week of Prayer, Philippine Churches set aside Differences**
- **One Baptism: Towards Mutual Recognition**

[Click here for the complete Newsletter - Events - Resources](#)

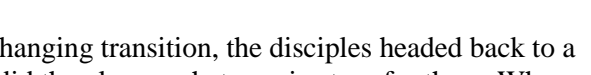
Egypt's Revolutionary Year & the Church's Response

Free Webinar by Presbyterian World Mission

Wednesday, February 1, 2-3 p.m. EST

[Register now](#)

Presbyterian World Mission



Much has changed in the Middle East over the past year. In fact, [the revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests](#) that began in Tunisia and spread throughout the Arab world that began in December 2010 are still ongoing, resulting in sweeping governmental changes in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. In [Egypt](#) in particular, Hosni Mubarak resigned in February 2011 after 18 days of massive protests, ending his 30-year presidency. Time magazine named "the protester" its Person of the Year, signifying the importance and influence of the unrest in the world at this time.

Many Christians not only participated in the protests in Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt, and still more served the injured at clinics and hospitals. Further, throughout the last year, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt found ways to engage with the Egyptian society through dialogue and service, and has played a proactive role in mapping out a new future for their country.

Presbyterian work in Egypt is an undeniable mission success story. [American Presbyterian mission activities in Egypt began in 1854](#) and under the auspices of the United Presbyterian Church of North America. Hundreds of mission coworkers served in Egypt, for about twelve decades as educators, theological teachers, medical teams, rural health workers, agricultural experts, engineers and other specialists. The church planted by those early missionaries grew into the largest Protestant church in the Middle East, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt, Synod of the Nile.

In this webinar, you'll:

- hear directly from one of our global partners in Egypt and discover what the church is doing to provide a witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ;
- gain deeper understanding of the revolutionary events that are sweeping the Middle East, and learn about helpful resources for further reading and study;
- find out how you can pray for Egyptians;
- discover ways you can be engaged with the work of Presbyterian World Mission as it stands shoulder to shoulder in solidarity with the Egyptian Church;

You are an important part of the conversation! Join us with your questions for Egypt's Revolutionary Year and the Church's Response. [Register now](#)

Get Connected to World Mission

Holistic partnership with World Mission

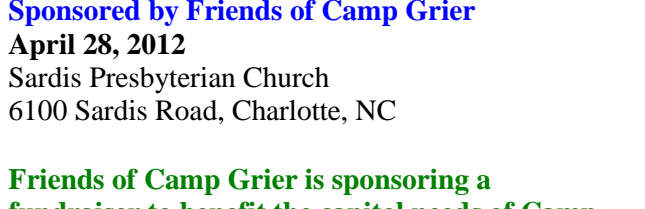
With more than 200 mission workers in over 50 countries, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been sending mission co-workers around the world continuously since 1837. The year 2012 celebrates this 175th anniversary of international mission by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church.

Partner with World Mission by making this P.L.E.D.G.E.:

- PRAY** each day with and for mission workers, for our global partners, and the people they serve
- LEARN** about mission and workers' ministries
- DISCOURAGE** people to become long-term mission workers
- ENCOURAGE** where and how you can better serve God by serving others in mission work
- GIVE** your time, love, energy, gifts and financial contributions
- ENGAGE** in the faithful and effective mission with mission workers by advocating for justice, sharing the good news of God's love, and seeking reconciliation in the world

[How to connect with a mission worker](#)

- **Host a mission worker**
To learn how your congregation can host a [mission speaker](#), contact [Carol Somplatsky-Jarman](#).
- **Mission Crossroads on the web** provides an educational resource and interactive community for people interested in mission trips and partnerships. [Find out more](#) →
- **Mission Crossroads is on Facebook**. Share and discover mission stories, best practices and concerns in a joint search for more faithful and effective mission involvement. [Connect on Facebook](#).
- **Follow Mission Crossroads on Twitter**. Get informative tweets about how Presbyterians can be better together as branches of the same vine, connecting people with resources and tools for engaging with each other and with God's mission in the world. Visit [Twitter](#) and follow [@PCUSAMXR](#)



GONE FISHING

by Beverly A. Thompson and George B. Thompson, Jr.

Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish.

--John 21:4-6

We should not be surprised.

In the midst of grief and anxiety, not to mention a life-changing transition, the disciples headed back to a place that felt normal, natural, familiar, and safe. Little did they know what was in store for them. When all else failed, these guys knew how to fish. They had fished for a living for years. Then one day, this Jesus had called them to follow him, and they dropped their nets and left behind the life they had known.

For hours, these dejected former members of a religious movement gone bad--and then strangely good again--cast their nets to no avail. There were no fish to be caught, just more frustration--until, unexpectedly, a familiar voice urged them to fish from the boat's other side. They listened to that voice and did just what was asked of them. Then, before they knew it, they had caught loads of fish. Their nets filled to the brim, they joined the One whose voice they had trusted, Jesus. Gathered around that small fire on the beach, they shared a meal with him--a meal they would never forget. Once again, nothing was as they thought: It was deeper, richer, and life-changing.

All too often, congregations that find themselves in the in-between time of a transition do exactly what the disciples did: They go back to whatever they were doing before the crisis presented itself. This strategy worked out well for the disciples in this story--but only because Jesus was there waiting for them, offering them one more chance to understand who he was and the new thing he was calling them to do.

Continue reading [Gone Fishing](#)



Track and improve worship attendance with CAP

Worship attendance is a primary indicator of congregational vitality, but few churches track attendance in a way that reveals long-term trends. CAP, the Congregational Attendance Profile, reveals these trends to help you improve worship attendance.

CAP helps you track attendance better.

CAP monitors weekly attendance against a 52-week running average. Instead of simply knowing how a Sunday's attendance compares to the previous week's, you'll know how it compares to the entire past year's average, revealing larger trends and patterns.

CAP helps you improve attendance.

CAP doesn't just track attendance — it reveals clues to improve attendance. CAP effortlessly produces a two-year trends chart showing the big picture — whether overall attendance is rising, declining, or flat. A seasonal attendance chart superimposes your 52-week average over actual attendance, revealing peaks and dips. On a CAP video segment, Lewis Center Director Lovett H. Weems, Jr., explains how to interpret and use these data. Churches have shown major improvement in attendance by acting on lessons learned from CAP.

CAP is easy to use.

Simply input your past attendance figures into the CAP spreadsheet, then once a week add your latest numbers. CAP automatically does the rest, and it works for churches with single worship services as well as those with many.

CAP is only \$39. [Learn more now.](#) <http://www.churchleadership.com/CAP>

Opportunities

Upcoming Camp Grier Events

Hope Music Festival & Battle of the Bands

Sponsored by Friends of Camp Grier

April 28, 2012

Sardis Presbyterian Church

6100 Sardis Road, Charlotte, NC

Friends of Camp Grier is sponsoring a fundraiser to benefit the organization of Camp Grier ([www.campgrier.org](#)). Come join us in worshipping and praising God through the fellowship of music.

Your praise band is invited to participate in our first Battle of the Bands featuring contemporary Christian music.

You are also invited to participate throughout the day at the Open Mike and/or small group jams.

Support your favorite musicians, support the outdoor ministry of Camp Grier, and support our festival sponsors by attending HopeFest. Food and drinks will be available throughout the day so you can make a family outing of a day given to praising God.

Registration forms for the Battle of the Bands are available at [www.hopemusicfestival.org](#).

Camp Grier 5K Trail Run/Walk
Saturday, April 14th

Come to Camp Grier for their 5K Trail Run/Walk on April 14th. The race begins at 10 AM.

Overnight accommodations are also available on Friday, April 13th with breakfast at Camp Grier before the 5K.

[Click here for details and registration.](#)

Registration due by April 9th.

Resources

New Youth Study

Understanding the full significance of Lent can sometimes be difficult for youth and teens. This week's new-session Lenten study, "[What Is Lent?](#)" helps youth understand that Lent is much more than simply giving up something that holds power over us. This study leads youth in using historical, liturgical, and spiritual resources to develop a broad and deep response to the question, what is Lent?

Featured Books:

- **Leant for Everyone: Mark, Year B**. A Daily Devotional, by N. T. Wright \$9.00 **40% OFF!*
- **24 Hours That Changed the World Devotional**, 40 Days of Reflection, by Adam Hamilton \$5.99 **40% OFF!*
- **Walking the Way of the Cross with Paul**. A Lenten Study Pack for Adults, by David Rensberger \$26.00 & Downloadable!

Prayer Requests

Please pray for

- ✦ **Rev. Burl Shore & Family** (HR, Presbytery Personnel Committee, Members at Clemmons PC) Burl's wife, Jane, passed away the morning of January 23rd after dealing with an illness. A celebration of her life will be held at 2 p.m. on Friday, January 27 at Clemmons Presbyterian Church with Dr. William Hoyle, the Rev. Jay Banasiak, and Dr. Judson Milam officiating. Following her memorial service, her ashes will be inurned in the church's columbarium. [Click here to read the obituary.](#)

- ✦ **Rev. Jeff Duane Smith & Family** (Pastor at Mebane PC) Jeff's 97 yr. old grandmother is in the hospital and has become unresponsive.

Please share this newsletter with others in your congregation and committees.

This newsletter goes out via email to all Ministers, Lay Pastors, Clerks of Session, Educators, Churches, Church Treasurers, Neighborhood Connectors, Committee Chairs, and to those who requested to be on the mailing list.

[Click Here for the Weekend Update Online.](#)

Questions, comments or e-mail address change? Email Bre Van Dorpe, the newsletter editor, at bvandorpe@salem-presbytery.org

www.salem-presbytery.org 336-766-3393