

THE BETHANY BEACON



June 2018

Kathryn Baker, Editor

GENERAL ASSEMBLY-TOP 10 ISSUES

While trying to predict what shape any Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assembly will take, several issues are shaping up to take center stage June 16-23 when the 223rd General Assembly convenes in St. Louis. The first order of business for the 538 commissioners and about 200 advisory delegates will be to elect their moderator. Then the 13 Assembly Committees will work their way through the items of business this Assembly will consider. That business will include a mix of social and theological issues and the internal workings of the PC (USA). The 10 issues most apt to capture major attention at the Assembly:

Election of the Moderator: Three slates — two co-moderator teams and one moderator/vice-moderator pair — have formally announced their intention to stand for moderator.

Fossil Fuel Divestment: For the third Assembly in a row, an overture has been submitted asking PC(USA) investing agencies (primarily the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Founda-

tion) to divest of stock in fossil fuel companies.

Israel-Palestine/Middle East: With positions hardening in the region, at least three overtures ask for continued work on Middle East peace, particularly in Israel-Palestine. An overture from Cascades Presbytery calls for the PC(USA) to respond to the crisis in Syria focused on four principles: stop the killing; work for reconciliation; alleviate the suffering; and deepen PC(USA) partnerships with Syrian Christians.

Per Capita: With economic stresses affecting the PC (USA) at all levels and amidst a rapidly changing ministry context everywhere, a 2019 per capita increase of \$2.98 per member to \$10.71 (a 39 percent increase over 2018) and \$.74 in 2020 to \$11.45 is being sought by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly in order to rebuild and reinforce the work of mid councils with their congregations denomination-wide. An overture from Newton Presbytery seeks a study of the system of per capita funding in the PC(USA).

The Way Forward: Without

bishops or other centralized authority figures, the question of who speaks to and for Presbyterians in the church and the world is an issue that has received extensive attention by the Way Forward Commission, a group appointed by the 222nd General Assembly to find better ways for the PC (USA) to operate in the 21st century. The Commission's recommendations strengthen the office of General Assembly Stated Clerk, making that person the formal "head of communion," clarify the Stated Clerk's role as the primary spokesperson to and for the church, and strengthen the Stated Clerk's overall management role in the ministry of all the church's national agencies. The reports of the Way Forward Commission and the Assembly's All-Agency Review Committee propose a number of ways the work of the denomination's national agencies — particularly the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency — can be made more efficient, more effective, and more collaborative. The most contentious

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June Scriptures

- 6/3—2 Cor. 4:5-12, Mark 2:23-3:6
- 6/10—1 Samuel 8:4-18, Mark 3:20-35
- 6/17—2 Cor. 5:6-10, Mark 4:26-34
- 6/24—2 Cor. 6:1-13, Mark 4:35-41
- 7/1—Psalm 130, Mark 5:21-43

The Beacon editor is taking a couple of months R & R. Next issue will be published for distribution the first of September.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY (CONT.)

(Continued from page 1)

recommendations are around the structure and responsibilities of the denomination's Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) A Corporation.

Racism/Poverty/Violence: Against the backdrop of a history of conflict in St. Louis around racism, violence and poverty dating back well before the police shooting of Michael Brown in nearby Ferguson in 2014, the Assembly will address a number of issues around those questions. A report from local and denominational leaders entitled "The Gospel from St. Louis" will come to the Assembly through the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. Through the "Hands and Feet" initiative launched by General Assembly Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson, II, Assembly-goers will have a number of opportunities to learn, engage in direct community service, and participate in public witness events around the issues of racism,

poverty and violence.

Immigration: Though at this date no formal business has been submitted, with the continuing threats of deportation and detention of immigrants, many of them Presbyterians from such countries as Indonesia, the issue of immigration is sure to be addressed at the Assembly. The Assembly is also apt to address the plight of some 800,000 immigrants whose status is uncertain due to the federal government's failure to address the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and the DREAM (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) Act.

Gun Violence: New Castle Presbytery has submitted an overture, which addresses the epidemic of gun violence in this country, affirms previous General Assembly policies designed to reduce gun violence and urges all Presbyterians to pray for an end to gun violence and to take steps to reduce gun violence in

the U.S.

Paid Family Leave: The Presbytery of Boston has submitted a package of three overtures that instructs the Board of Pensions to include 12 weeks of paid parental leave as part of its benefits package, including financial assistance to help congregations pay for a supply pastor during the leave; calls for family leave of 12 weeks to be included in all terms of call; and to include paid family leave of at least 12 weeks as part of the responsibilities of presbyteries.

Pastoral Leadership for Immigrant Congregations: As the number of immigrant fellowships grows in the PC(USA), the question of finding adequate leadership for these nascent congregations is more frequently asked. An overture from de Cristo Presbytery seeks more flexible ways to ordain immigrant congregational leaders as ruling elders in order to provide more and better leadership for the whole church.

THE CALL OF THE WATERS—MESSAGE FROM BOLIVIA

PART 2

While attending UMAVIDA's (Joining Hands for Life) General Assembly in March, discussions included the volatile political situation of the country. The government continues to crack down on environmentally-focused organizations, while it turns its head and money toward the gas and mining markets, as well as the construction of hydroelectric plants. Even though the Constitution requires consulting the potentially displaced indigenous communities and villages before construction begins, no consultation was carried out and construction is well underway.

Organizations such as UMAVIDA now must walk a fine line in expressing grievances to the government and in defining their work focus in general. We continue to work, though, focusing on the issue of water and advocating for environmental rights and justice. Our campaign is no longer solely focused in the

mining center, Oruro, and on mining contamination, but also looks to address water contamination issues in the sister cities of La Paz and El Alto. The specific focus there is on a water treatment plant that is not able to adequately treat all of the wastewater from the surrounding areas. The affected communities have spoken out for change for years, and now UMAVIDA members will be joining the struggle. Our goal is to work locally, but eventually to move toward a national change in water norms and regulations.

Again, my spiritual world grows in being able to accompany this mission work. Walking with our global partners here sparks love and joy. Long-term mission requires patience and gentleness. Small victories move us towards peace. Taking cues from our partners — their knowledge and experiences — humbles all those who suggest it can be done otherwise.

Just as my motherly world creates great vulnerability within me at times, we are in a vulnerable state as a network as well. We must walk carefully, but never forget the lessons we have learned along the way, the gifts we have acquired and our revolutionary call as Christians and people to be a presence of unconditional love and to speak out for just change.

With Peace & Joy,

Chenoa



TOURIST TO ANIMAL CONTACT

By Kathy Penne

When I told friends I was going to South Africa in April, the most frequent question was "Why?" "To see animals running free," was my usual reply. Little did I know what one-on-one contact could entail when we visited three wildlife parks and stayed in two wildlife lodges during our 17 days. Yes, we saw the big five and countless other animals and birds.

At the Lugogo Sun Game Lodge, Kathy (a lady from Salt Lake) met a cute little velvet monkey up close and personal. It decided it wanted her bag and grabbed it. She started screaming, attracting two bar employees. They came running. One grabbed a stick and hit the monkey. The monkey snatched his stick and hit him back, still holding on to her bag. The second man grabbed a small bucket of ice and threw it on the monkey. It finally turned loose. They then checked her for broken skin. She only had a large bruise. If the monkey had broken skin, she would be rushed to a doctor.

Monkey mouths are septic. Not so cute now.

Krugar National Park. I laboriously crawled up to the third seat of a four seat game jeep to meet the animals. Our guide explained the animals have the right-of-way. It is their park. We waited 20 minutes for a pack of wild dogs to quit playing, rolling in the dirt, and lounging around in the road so we could continue. Great close up pictures.

Later we spotted a bull elephant standing in the shade of a tree. Given it's in mating season, he is smelly, desperate and very dangerous, given his quick temper and great brute strength (his back was even with the roof above our game jeep). He finally stomped off the road. He had attracted 4 more game jeeps and two private cars, all wanting that great picture. A driver facing us decided she wanted a better view and moved forward vertically, blocking the road.

Mr. Elephant decided he should never have given up his tree. His trunk raised,

tail out, ears out, he started to trumpet as he ran toward our jeep, his 5-6 foot tusks out. Elephants can easily toss a jeep. Fear gripped us. This was way too close and personal. No way to escape with that car blocking the road. Fortunately for us he changed his mind less than 3 feet from the fourth seat of our jeep.

Yes, I did go to see the animals. I didn't realize it might mean putting my life in danger. I always tell people I would rather die on vacation than in Fruitland. I just never believed it could happen.



BETHANY BULLETIN BOARD

Presbytery met at Boone on May 5. Joey Mills, Kathryn Baker and Marilyn Blair-Clausen attended from Bethany.

Synod of the Pacific met at the Red Lion Riverside May 9-11. Steve Toth preached at worship. Kathryn Baker (recording clerk) and Joey Mills (commissioner) also attended from Bethany.

The Weiser High School Robotics Team competed against 579 other high schools from around the world recently. They finished with a 3-7 record, putting them in the top 5% of the "robots" in the world.

College of Idaho history professor and Presbyterian, Dr. Mark Smith is under consideration for a nomination for the Condill History Prize, one of the most prestigious international awards an historian can receive.

Session and Deacons both met for regular meetings in May. The Deacons will meet again in September unless there is an emergency.

Continue to pray for a return to good health for Linda. She hopes to be attending General Assembly in June.

Dave Carpenter has had his second knee surgery and is in therapy. He and Marty hope to be back with us soon.

Remember to bring items for the All Church Garage Sale, September 8. If your item does not sell and you want it returned, please mark it.

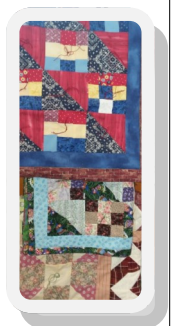
Thank you, Bethany. You gave \$575 to the Pentecost Offering. 40% will be given to the Fruitland Preparatory Academy (FPA) for their wish list, which includes large pieces of material for quilt backs, gardening items (seeds, plastic

rock), Little Free Library construction, book sets for teaching, and bulletin board supplies. Please continue to hold FPA and its staff in prayer.

Bethany's insurance company has paid the entire 2016 snow damage claim, including the cleaning.

Chenoa writes, "I enjoyed reading about Pentecost, the flame, and what it is to be a small church [in the May Beacon]. And, of course, about all of your mission outreach! Thank you for adding me to this newsletter list. It's great to keep in touch this way.

Pray for the "blessed closing" of Ontario Methodist and for their congregants as they search for new church homes.



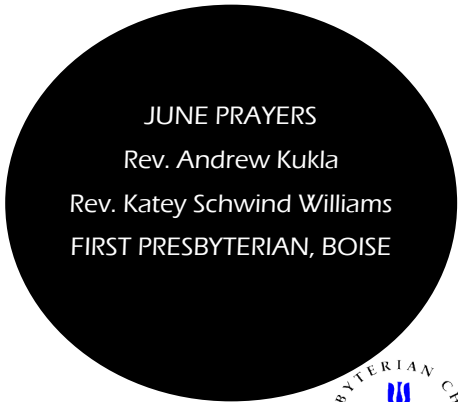
FPA Quilts

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Love, forgive, grow.



JUST A FEW WORDS...



Dear Hearts:

On the corner of the cul-de-sac where I live, there is a duplex that, rather than a lawn, has gravel in the front and down the side. The homes are tidy and pleasant with quiet, older folks living there. The woman on the corner threw out some California poppy seeds in the spring of 2017, and they promptly sprouted to produce a pleasant little cluster of poppies. This spring, however, Mother Nature went more than a little berserk ... those poppies spread out over the rocks like it was river bottom, and they are so beautiful.

I enjoy them in the early morning when their little faces are rolled up in sleep.

Then around noon they open one eye, then the other, and next thing you know their faces are turned out full-force and following the sun.

I grew up in California where poppies grow wild on the hillsides. It was a glorious sight to see the gold manifest itself in the spring and welcome the purple of the lupines as they, together, embodied the purple of the mountains and the gold that was Old California.

God is gracious and generous to us all, no exceptions, in the beauty of the earth. The fragile and delicate poppy and the hearty lupine join forces in God's love to bring us such a delight to the senses. It is true and noteworthy that, "God so loved the world..."

In Christ's Love,

Joey

June, July, August Birthdays

June: Mark VW (6/3), Mary Lou Feasel (6/13), Steve Toth (6/17), Kathryn Baker (6/23), Joey Mills (6/27)

July: Terry Warrington (7/1), Beth Magrini (7/11), Donald Oakes (7/14), Kathy Penne (7/16), Charles Oakes (7/21), Ilea Jones (7/22)

August: Hunter Oakes (8/2), Sandy Gregory (8/8), Robert Bolyard (8/8), Jeanette Moore (8/13), Bea Mitchell (8/18), Marilyn B-C (8/21), James Bolyard (8/22), Gayle VW (8/23), Cali Burzota (8/27)