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October 2011

The Banner

Newsletter of the Presbytery of Arkansas



In Touch

by General Presbyterian Rev. Dr. William F. Galbraith

Bridge Building

I've been thinking about bridge building this week, bridge building among the congregations and through the mission efforts of our Presbytery. Been thinking about links that exist and those that could. Been wondering about those who feel connected and those who don't, those nearby and those on the edges. The implications of bridge building for the Presbytery of Arkansas are far reaching.

More importantly, the implications are critical for our life together. This bridge building is more complex than pulling together to accomplish goals though it includes that. It's more about seeking to be aware about what we share that may be more important than how we differ.



Bridge building, "...is not about the birds chirping and everyone getting together to sing Kum-Ba-Yah like we're in a giant Coca Cola commercial," Rabbi Brad Hirschfield says when taking the bridge building concept to a deeper level.

This view gradually evolved for Hirschfield. When he was seventeen, he told his parents that he was going to Israel. But not just go to Israel, he was going to study in an all male school, a Yeshiva, a Jewish seminary. And not only was he going to study in Israel to become a rabbi, he was going to study in one of the world's most dangerous places, Hebron. At the time, Hebron was precarious. There were 50 Jewish settlers and over 100,000 Palestinians. Hirschfield had gone to Hebron because, "God had sent me." He went to see the ushering in of the day when Jews would reclaim the land God had given them. He was taking an active role in fulfilling biblical prophecy and he says, "I was certain I was right." Because of the riskiness of living as a settler in Hebron, Hirschfield carried a rifle in one hand and a book in the other. He says, "I've fired at human targets twice in my life. I don't know if my shots hit their mark."

In time, because of what Hirschfield describes as, "the excesses of my own community," Hirschfield began to wonder about his experience in trying to "reconstitute the biblical Jewish community." He wondered, "Who's paying the price, not just within the Jewish community but beyond it?" "If we're not asking that question," he says, "dangerous stuff happens," like acts of terror. He goes on to say, "before we teach others, particularly about faith, morality or anything else, we need to learn about them, to let them teach us."

"When you love who you're with, not that you agree on everything, it's amazing how gentle you can be with those with whom you disagree," Hirschfield has discovered. Bridge building? "It's about building genuine relationships."

What if we began to ask Hirschfield's question, "Who's paying the price?" more often? What if we asked it of ourselves in our relationships within our families, our communities and beyond. What if we're really as concerned about others as ourselves? What if we sought to learn from those who are different, whose

ideas may seem strange and whose religion may be a mystery? To the point, what if we began to genuinely seek relationships with those in our own congregations who see life differently? The bridges we so need may yet be built as we ask the question, listen to each other and continue to learn. As with the good rabbi, there's always room to rethink our own positions.

Yours in faith,
[Bill](#)

(Brad Hirschfield is the author of [You Don't Have to Be Wrong for Me to Be Right: Finding Faith Without Fanaticism](#), Harmony 2008)

General Presbyter's Out of Office Schedule

October

19-20 Association of Executive Presbyters, Pittsburgh
 22 Visioning/Planning Group, Little Rock
 23-29 Colleague Group with Rabbi Brad Hirschfield - Mo-Ranch, Hunt, Texas
 30 100th Anniversary, First Presbyterian, Rogers
 30 Installation of Chris Jones, First Presbyterian, Jonesboro

November

1-2 Synod of the Sun, Tulsa
 3-4 Executive Presbyter Forum, Tulsa
 5 General Council, Conway

A Polity Point by Rev. Cathy Ulrich, Stated Clerk

"But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift . . . The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ . . ." Ephesians 4:1, 12

One of the principles of our polity is the understanding that every member of the church is involved in ministry. We also affirm that some members are called to the particular roles of deacons, ruling elders, and teaching elders.



Formerly we referred to these as "offices" - the [Book of Order](#) now refers to these as "ordered" ministries.

The rite to this ministry continues to be ordination. However, the term now used is "order of ministry" rather than "office."

The rationale for this change was the understanding of moving away from terms used in the secular world. An "office" is the term used on a board of directors or a club which elects people to carry out its purpose.

The church understands these roles as spiritual leaders. The ordering of this ministry helps us to redefine this calling as being set aside for God's purpose in the church, participating in the covenant and discipline which is the hallmark of our tradition.

"Members and those in ordered ministries serve together under the mandate of Christ." [G-2.0101]

Blessings & peace
[Cathy](#)

First Presbyterian, Conway Hosts 118th Stated Meeting of Presbytery

by [NiAnn Thompson](#), Assistant Stated Clerk

(Commissioners may use this information as their report to Session. A printable copy is available [here](#).)

The Presbytery of Arkansas convened Friday evening, October 14, 2011 in the sanctuary of First Presbyterian, Conway after four pre-presbytery workshops. Moderator Sam Highsmith called the meeting to order for the opening session of business. Evening worship was led by Blake Thompson, Theresa Spragins, Revs. Brian Brock, Gordon Garlington and Kenny Shaw, sermon by Commissioned Ruling Elder Kelly Pearson and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper celebrated by Revs. Frank LeBlanc and Jan Butin. Music was presented by the chancel choir, pianist Clara Martin, organist Lyle Rupert and trumpets and trombones. A total of 189 people (137 of whom were voting commissioners) registered for the two-day presbytery meeting. Worship offering for the Cents-ability hunger program (formerly two cents a meal) totaled \$1537.40. A Wholeness and Healing Service of worship led by Rev. Tom Ulrich began Saturday's half-day session of business.

PRESBYTERY VOTED TO:

- Dissolve the Administrative Commissions for Crossover Property (Fayetteville), First, Berryville and Highland, Hot Springs, and the Vision Task Force as their work is complete.
- Accept the report of the annual review of session records by clusters
- Approve communion at the annual Spring Retreat sponsored by Congregational Care and Development
- Concur with Ferncliff Board's election of five people to the Class of 2014
- Approve the 2011 terms of call for Presbyterian clergy
- Use funds from Highland property sale in redevelopment of small churches
- Elect 79 people to fill vacancies and full terms on committees, councils and other task groups
- Enroll inquirers Jen Bluestein and Becky Purcell as candidates for ministry
- Approve a Sexual Misconduct Policy for ministers, commissioned ruling elders, certified Christian educators and presbytery employees after limiting debate and instruct Committee on Ministry and Stated Clerk to collect "acknowledgement of receipts" of policy
- Grant honorable retirement to Rev. Donn Walters and Rev. Ron Jones
- Dissolve pastoral relationship of Rev. Marci Ward and First, Clarksville
- Receive Revs. Elizabeth Gabbard and Lance Jones as at-large members
- Approve covenant of Rev. Kris Crawford as interim pastor of First, Fort Smith
- Enroll Rev. Chris Jones as a member, approve his terms as pastor of First, Jonesboro and the commission for his installation
- Approve Rev. Rebecca Spooner as stated supply of First, Lonoke and her terms
- Approve Rev. David Dyer, honorably retired, as interim pastor of First, Searcy and his terms
- Approve Rev. Al Henager as pastor of First, Heber Springs, his terms and the commission for his installation
- Yoke First, Van Buren and First, Alma to form a Larger Parish
- Approve Rev. Jan Huffstetler from Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery as interim pastor for First, Harrison
- Commission James W. Hays, Jr. as commissioned ruling elder for Memorial Presbyterian, Atkins



Rev. Ron Jones



Rev. Chris Jones



Rev. Lance Jones

CHANGES VOTED TO PRESBYTERY DOCUMENTS:

The Presbytery's Standing Rules will be altered to include training the vice-moderator elect as moderator, install the vice-moderator in February and authorize the vice-moderator to preside at presbytery meetings in absence of moderator; lower the threshold for congregations to send two ruling elder commissioners to presbytery meetings from 500 to 300 members and choose an additional ruling elder to balance installed or interim clergy; change name of Cursillo to Pilgrimage and welcome non-Presbyterians to attend.

The Manual of Operations will be altered to eliminate the ninth voting position on Committee on Nominations and approve the contract/covenant agreement with Laurence Schmidt Center for 2012.

PRESBYTERY HEARD REPORTS OF:

- Stated Clerk Cathy Ulrich recognizing the lives, ministries and legacies of First, Berryville and Highland, Hot Springs

-Appreciation of Committee on Administration for the support of congregations for the presbytery, saw this year's stewardship video report and the proposed 2012 budget

-Arkansas Presbyterian Musicians, "New Form of Government" changes to the Book of Order, Committee on Mission and especially their hunger emphasis, Presbyterian Women's work this year and projected dates for 2012, celebration of the milestone anniversaries of ministers' ordination, Committee on Disaster Preparation and Response and especially the 300 flood buckets filled and returned

-Transferral of Revs. Kofi Adzaku, Craig King, Tracy Julian Williams, Chip Andrus, Steve Merrin and James Freeman to other presbyteries

-Committee on Christian Education and Nurture including Pilgrimage, Youth Council video and the Lay Academy graduation of 26 students plus honoring Rev. Heinrich Eiler for 10 years as academy dean and subcommittee moderator

-PC(USA) Theological Education Fund and certificates given to the nine congregations who have contributed



CRE Jim Hays



Rev. Elizabeth Gabbard

PRESBYTERY READ REPORTS OF:

-Annual consultation of candidates for ministry Barbara Padgett and Susie Wiggins

-General Council's actions as follows: filling vacancies on Administrative Commissions; forming an Administrative Commission for First, Harrison; renewing the covenant with Arkansas Chapter of National Black Presbyterian Caucus without change; approving changes to the presbytery meeting formats to begin in February; concurring with tearing down and removing the manse of Harmony, Clarksville after tornado damage.

-Committee on Ministry's actions as follows: decision to honor current interim pastor agreements until COM studies the new form of government, and approval of covenants with CRE Josh Bridges and First, Beebe and CRE Jim Keyes and One-o-One, Gamaliel

- Annual report from Committee on Clusters



Rev. Dr. Heinrich Eiler

People and Church News

News of Our People

- Best wishes to **Rev. Judith March Kelley** of Hot Springs who married Matthew Bryant Hardie on September 7. She has accepted the call to serve as pastor of Willow Creek Presbyterian, Argyle, Illinois in Blackhawk Presbytery.

- Best wishes to **Rev. John King** who married **Ruling Elder Sally Kelley** on September 24 at First United, Fayetteville. John is pastor of First, Prairie Grove.

- Christian sympathy goes to **Rev. Tracy Julian Williams**, now of West Columbia, Texas, and husband **Rev. Bruce Williams** on the death of her mother Betty Julian on September 21. Until recently Tracy was pastor of Harmony Presbyterian, Clarksville.

- **Stanley Livengood** of First, Fort Smith, collaborated with St. John's Episcopal and First United Methodist, both of Fort Smith, in creating a Community Peace Service held on September 11 at 3:00 at First United Methodist.

News of Our Congregations & Ministries

- **First, Little Rock** is conducting a capital campaign to fund building improvements.

- **Mountainburg Presbyterian** held prayer services on September 8 and 15 and a church picnic on September 18.

- **First, Hot Springs** sings the same "Hymn of the Month" as the opening hymn each Sunday for a month.

- **Graham Memorial Presbyterian, Forrest City** held a spaghetti dinner on September 10 to benefit the Solar Under The Sun program to use solar power to purify water supplies.

- **First, Van Buren Presbyterian Women** welcomes the **First, Alma PW** to the former's studies.
- **First, Newport's** newsletter gives local safety tips and reports on the adult class studying the book "Love Wins" by Rob Bell.
- **Central Presbyterian, Pine Bluff** has formed a team for the Race for the Cure event on October 22.
- Deacons at **Trinity Presbyterian, Little Rock** transport members to Sunday worship, Senior Social events, women's Bible circles and medical appointments.
- **First, Pine Bluff** is planning a "Music Together" program for newborns through 4-year-olds and their parents to complement the music program of song and handchimes for older children.
- **Westminster Presbyterian, Hot Springs** has written a new Mission Statement emphasizing "sharing the Good News."
- The **Presbyterian Church of Bella Vista** hosted a Christian Education Workshop on September 29-30. Workshop presenters were Rev. Laura Fleetwood, Rev. Phil Butin, Rev. David Gill, and Rev. Stewart Smith.

Idea of the Month

- **Second Presbyterian, Little Rock's** stewardship campaign features home gatherings spread over five weeks and a 12-hour prayer vigil on October 6 to which people may submit prayer requests or at which pray for the church, its mission and ministries, specific individuals and situations, and the needs of the world.

Prayer List for Congregations - 2011 can be found [here](#).

Answering the Call

by [Brian Perry](#), Director of Mission Support

On September 16 I received the message from Rev. David Gill (Executive Director of Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center) that 252 Emergency Clean-up Buckets had left the Disaster Assistance Center bound for First Presbyterian, Johnson City, New York.

First, Johnson City had been set-up to help people in the area recover from flooding.

Most of those 252 buckets came from the churches of this Presbytery.

...And more are being prepared for shipment. The lobby of the Presbytery office now sits empty as the buckets to be filled are long gone, and many of the filled buckets have now been delivered to Ferncliff. As of the time I am writing this, Ferncliff has the only remaining Clean-Up Buckets in the Church World Service inventory.

As Rev. John Robinson of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance told me "The churches of the Presbytery of Arkansas are always resilient in a crisis, and are the first to assist when asked."

The Disaster Assistance Center can be contacted at 501.821.3063 and donations can be sent to the Presbytery Office.

(Presbytery's Committee on Disaster Preparedness and Response funded the flood buckets purchased.)

Save the Date



**Arkansas Presbyterian Cursillo
October 20-23, 2011**

Ferncliff Camp & Conference Center

Cursillo is a short course in living the Christian faith with the objective to inspire, challenge and equip church members for Christian action. The staff is lay-led and composed of Presbyterian laity and clergy who have previously attended a 3-day weekend. Experience short talks, music, fellowship, small group discussion and great food. Applications are available [here](#), by calling 870.688.9189, or by e-mail request arpc.registrar@gmail.com.

(Cursillo receives funding from Presbytery's Committee on Christian Education and Nurture.)

**David LaMotte Concert
First United Presbyterian, Fayetteville
Thursday, October 27, 7:00 p.m.**

Proceeds to support United Campus Ministry at the University of Arkansas and FUPC's Solar Under The Sun mission projects.

If you don't know about David, please visit his website www.davidlamotte.com. There is a \$10 suggested donation. Contact Kristi Button kbutton@fupcfay.org or Susan Rose ucm_chaplain@yahoo.com for more information.

**A Safe Place Retreat for Bereaved Parents
November 11-13**

Presbyterian Mo-Ranch Assembly

Rev. Carl McCormack, pastor of First, Malvern will be on staff.
More information [here](#).

Opportunities

First Presbyterian, Hot Springs seeks part-time Youth Director

15 hours per week
More information [here](#).

Westminster Presbyterian, Hot Springs seeks Youth Ministries Director

More information [here](#).

Presbyterian Women News can be found [here](#).

(The PW Coordinating Team receives funding in the Presbytery budget.)

[Resource Center News](#)

by [NiAnn Thompson](#), Resourcing Director
Phone 501.663.2424, ext. 104
Tuesday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



This fall please check out these timely studies produced by our denomination

- "Neither Poverty nor Riches: Compensation, Equity, and the Unity of the Church" addresses how "secular market assumptions" affect your congregation, especially during stewardship time.
- "Living Through Economic Crisis: The Church's witness in troubled times" deals with the values of the PC(USA) in economic life, our empathetic outreach to those affected by foreclosure and job loss, and advocacy for services and goods for the public that are in jeopardy.

- "Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Mobilizing in response to God's call" studies the statistics of death and injury, preventing illegal guns from getting into the wrong hands, local education and reducing access to weapons by gangs.

A new kit "**Wee Children at Church: God's Word for God's Youngest People**" is also available for loan from YOUR Resource Center. It includes an easy-to-use guide for Caregivers and teachers of infants age 8 months through 3-year-old children; "Wee Children at Home," a data CD that provides families with ideas that connect home with church; 52 Bible story cards that offer colorful visuals and basic themes of Christian faith and 64 pages of age-appropriate enrichment activities.

What new DVD Studies do you need for your fall studies?

Bible, of course!

- "**Adult Crossings: God's Journey with Us**" (Acc. #DVD9532) focuses on the eight core stories of the Bible in 11 sessions on DVD, journal and leader's guide.
- "**Biblical Wisdom Literature**" (Acc. #DVD9536) in 36 lectures with course guidebook

Are adults' life event studies suggested in your congregation or community?

- "**Helping Parents Grieve: Finding New Life after the Death of a Child**" (Acc. #DVD9554)
- "**Journey Through the Shadows: Hope for healing after someone you love has committed suicide**" (Acc. #DVD9558), both with booklets

What about neglected church history in time for Reformation Day?

- "**Luther: Gospel, Law, and Reformation**" (Acc. #DVD9537) in 24 lectures with course guidebook

Or just the nagging questions of faith and life?

- "**Embracing Aging**" (Acc. #DVD9555) or "**Growing Older Gracefully**" (Acc. #DVD9556)
- "**Keep Climbing: Why God doesn't give you everything you want**" (Acc. #DVD9539) in four sessions with 4 DVDs, leader's guide and workbook.
- "**When Christians Get It Wrong**" by Adam Hamilton (Acc. #DVD9429) which Barbara Webb (First, Benton) reports contains Hamilton's best sermon and study.

Each congregation should have received at the presbytery meeting (or will be mailed) an Advent packet, full of great and easy ideas. One of those great ideas is to see (phone, fax, email, or check the online catalog of) YOUR Resource Center for all-church Advent studies and musical ideas!

(The Resource Center receives funding from Presbytery's Committee on Christian Education and Nurture.)

[Presbytery Calendar](#)

PRESBYTERY STAFF:

General Presbyter [BILL GALBRAITH](#)

Stated Clerk [CATHY ULRICH](#)

Resourcing Director & Assistant Stated Clerk [NIANN THOMPSON](#)

Director of Mission Support [BRIAN PERRY](#)

Presbytery Evangelist [JESSE GONZALEZ](#)

Staff Resource for Youth [WHITNEY BORDELON](#)

Staff Resource for Congregational Care & Development [MICHAEL VINSON](#)

Treasurer [BILLY STONE](#)

Moderator of Presbytery [SAM HIGHSMITH](#)

Vice Moderator of Presbytery [DAVID DYER](#)

Moderator of General Council [DEBRA CARL FREEMAN](#)



The Presbytery of Arkansas is a governing body of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), which is part of the Reformed family of churches within the universal Church of Jesus Christ. Our vision is ***to make visible the body of Christ*** (Acts II).

We are composed of over 14,000 Presbyterians gathered in 87 active churches, two new church developments and two fellowships located in various towns and cities in the northern two-thirds of the State of Arkansas.

Phone 501.663.2424 Fax 501.224.2429 <http://www.presbyteryofarkansas.org>

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