



November 2017

The Banner

Newsletter of the Presbytery of Arkansas

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Thoughts From the AMGCL Gathering

Stewart Smith, General Presbyter

In October, I attended the annual Association of Mid Council Leaders gathering in St. Louis. In odd numbered years, it is held in the city that will host the upcoming General Assembly Meeting. If you are making plans to attend General Assembly next summer in St. Louis, the dates are June 16 - 23, 2018 and plans are underway for a presbytery summer youth trip to experience the General Assembly meeting.

I found the time spent with fellow presbytery executives and stated clerks to be very productive. I discovered that most presbyteries are facing the same difficult issues that we are experiencing. I heard similar stories of the difficulty in finding pastoral leadership and congregations facing difficult choices due to aging facilities and declining resources. There are many talented leaders that are prayerfully searching for how our church can adjust and adapt in these challenging times in which we live.



Among the many things that made an impact on me, there is one that I want to share with you this month. Our denomination's stated clerk, J. Herbert Nelson and Frank Spencer, president of the Board of Pensions of the PCUSA participated in a question and answer session dealing with the challenges and opportunities that are facing mid-councils. They spoke of how our church has used the model of a broken political system in our congregations. We have used the label of liberal and conservative in trying to figure out who is where on a spectrum with only two choices. I have been frustrated with that as I have tried to decide where I fit both politically and in the church. In some gatherings and on some topics, I might have a more conservative outlook. In others, I will have a more liberal or progressive viewpoint. I have found in myself and in others - just because one votes Democrat or Republican, doesn't mean that one agrees with every issue or position that candidate may espouse. But when voting, most of the time we only have two choices. Often, we have done the same thing in the church while discussing very complicated and controversial issues. We have tended to try and force the issue into two choices - you're either for it or against it. And oftentimes I find myself understanding and agreeing with points on both sides of the issue - and looking for more choices in how to move forward together. J. Herbert Nelson concluded this part of his speech by saying, "I choose to be on the side of Jesus Christ." That seems to be a better option. Rather than trying to decide if we are conservative or liberal - we should be asking - "are we on the side of Jesus Christ?"

I keep hoping that one of these workshops or seminars will have "the answer" to our challenges and problems. I've yet to hear that. But it seems to me there must be a better way than being paralyzed by our anxiety and fear and being fearful of the change that is being forced upon us. A committee, a workshop, a seminar is not going to provide the answer.

As we continue to discern our way forward as a presbytery in these challenging times, I remind you of a verse from a hymn that many of us sang on Reformation Sunday, as we

marked 500 years since Martin Luther nailed the 95 theses on the door of the church in Wittneburg, Germany.

*"Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing.
Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing."*

I remind you that we are not facing these challenges alone. Jesus Christ is on our side, and we need to choose the way of Jesus Christ. We need to build up our relationships with each other and create an environment where God's Spirit may flourish.

In this season of Thanksgiving, I am very grateful for the committed work being done in the name of Jesus Christ on a daily basis by faithful Presbyterians across this great state. I continue to be thankful to be partnered with you in ministry as we seek to make visible the body of Christ in these challenging times in this beautiful part of God's creation. May each of you have a very blessed Thanksgiving Holiday!!

Stewart

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Nominations Sought for Committee, Ministry Area Service

Presbytery's Committee on Nominations is seeking names of qualified and willing persons to serve on presbytery ministry areas or committees or subcommittee beginning in 2018. To download the current form, [click here](#).

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Church Employment (and Other) Opportunities in our Presbytery

Pastor -- Huntsville First Presbyterian Church --First Presbyterian Church (Huntsville) seeks a half-time pastor to help lead their congregation. Full details are available through the CLC portal through www.pcusa.org. Inquiries can be directed via email to Jason Holt at jholtmd@gmail.com. The website for the church is: <http://fphar.church>.

Pastor -- First Presbyterian Church--Newport -- The First Presbyterian Church of Newport, AR, is searching for an energetic part-time minister to serve a small, loving and active congregation. Newport is a county-seat town in East Arkansas, and the members of the church are active in the life of the community. For more information, contact Marvin Hare, Jr. at mbhare@hughes.net or 870-217-3661.

First Presbyterian Church of Walnut Ridge is searching for a full-time minister. Full salary and benefits are available. The church is prepared to help that person repay educational debt over a several year period. For more information, please contact Tom Moore, (870) 219-9379, thomasmoore929@gmail.com.

Central Presbyterian Church (Fort Smith, AR) is searching for a full-time pastor. The church is between 251-400 members, with average worship attendance of 86 members. Desired experience is Solo Pastor/Head of Staff with 5-10 years of experience. Central Presbyterian Church is a welcoming community of faith that seeks to serve Jesus Christ through sharing our collective talents, proclaiming the Gospel, feeding the hungry, healing the brokenhearted, supporting local and worldwide missions, and enjoying the journey with the Triune God. For more information, visit the church's website at www.centrafortsmith.org, email at info@centrafortsmith.org or call 479-783-8966.

Second Presbyterian Church, Little Rock seeks *Associate Pastor for Congregational Nurture*. The person in this full-time ordained position will provide leadership and support for the church's ministries of pastoral care and counseling, hospital visitation, and congregational fellowship. Job Description can be found at <http://www.secondpreslr.org/search-for-associate-pastor/>. Personal Information Forms can be sent to Philip Shell at pshell88@gmail.com.

Second Presbyterian Church, Little Rock also seeks a *Director of Youth Ministries*. Now that Jen Evans, new Director of Youth, Young Adult, and Young Family Ministry has joined us at Second Presbyterian, we are excited to begin the search for her "team" of part-time staff to work with each of these ministries. Applications are being accepted for our new Director of Youth Ministries, a 20-hour per week position (benefits included). We hope to find an energetic and creative person with the strong leadership and interpersonal skills necessary to equip and nurture Christ-centered relationships between youth, their families, and the greater community. The Position Description can be found at www.secondpreslr.org. Please share this information with potential candidates!

Presbytery of Arkansas -- Interim Staff Resource for Youth (Part Time)

The search committee for an *Interim Staff Resource for Youth* position is now accepting applications. Members of the search committee are Catherine Allsbury, Kristi Button and Geoff Ryken.

Responsibilities include serving as the staff resource for the Youth Advisory Team and the Youth, Young Adults and Campus Ministry Area and Coordinating Youth Events and registrations. For a full job description of this position, [click here](#).

Applications and inquires can be sent to General Presbyter Stewart Smith at the presbytery office (9221 N. Rodney Parham, Little Rock, AR 72227) or by email (stewart@presbyteryofarkansas.org).

First, Clarksville has 23 blue choir robes, approximately 100 place settings of china embossed with "Presbyterian Church" in gold, and approximately 100 Blue Hymnals. These items are free to anyone who will come get them. For a file with photos, [click here](#). Contact Pat Farmer at nyphinny@gmail.com.

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Synod Educators "Adopt a Class" Hurricane Relief Project

Would Sunday School Classes or members of your congregation like to assist congregations in New Covenant and Mission Presbyteries who were impacted by Hurricane Harvey? Do you have a Christmas market or other mission opportunities coming up next month? What about adopting a Sunday School Class or two?

The Southcentral Region of the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (SCRAPCE) is sponsoring an "Adopt a Class" program. Impacted congregations will be able to apply for grants of up to \$1000 per classroom to help them replace supplies, curriculum, and equipment. We are working with Presbytery staff who have identified the need. In order to provide the funds, SCRAPCE Educator members are asking congregations across the Synod of the Sun to consider collecting funds to help with the project. Then a Sunday School Class (or group) from a particular congregation will be matched with an impacted Sunday School class so that they can exchange cards, pictures, prayers, and build a relationship.

Contributions are being received through the spring and grants (and class matching) will be made when requests arrive and funds are available. SCRAPCE asks that contributions come as one check per church sent to the treasurer in Houston with a donation form. Go to www.apcenet.org/south-central to download a flyer with information including the address to send the checks and the needed donation form. Contact Miatta Wilson at Miattaw@fpcdallas.org with questions.

For a flyer about the program, [click here](#). For a donor form, [click here](#).

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Maggie Alsup Ordained in Batesville

Candidate Maggie Alsup was ordained to the ministry on Sunday, October 22, 2017 at 2:00 PM, at First Presbyterian Church in Batesville, Arkansas. She is Chaplain at Lyon College in Batesville. Below is a photo of the Administrative Commission:



From left to right:

Reverend Leslie Roper- Minister, First Presbyterian Church, Batesville

Bruce Johnston- Elder, First Presbyterian Church, Batesville

Maggie Alsup

Reverend Mike McCracken- Minister, Wynne Presbyterian Church

Hannah Hanson- Elder, Grace Presbyterian Church, Little Rock

Ruth Hamilton- Moderator of the Presbytery of Arkansas

Revered Dr. Kimberly Clayton- Presbytery of Greater Atlanta

Dr. W. Joseph King- President of Lyon College

Revered David King- Minister, First Presbyterian Church, Searcy

Eddie Cooley- Elder, First Presbyterian Church, Newport

*Not pictured: Nancy Matthews- Elder, First Presbyterian Church, Norman OK

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From the Temporary Stated Clerk: Calling All Clerks!!!

Clerks of Session are the glue of Presbyterianism - you record who we are, what we're doing, and what direction God is calling us. Every month it is the Clerk who tracks the actions of the Session, and generally reports to the congregation.

A few times of the year you have additional tasks - tasks that your Temporary Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Arkansas thanks you for - and those times are quickly approaching. They are:

1. Completing PC(USA) Statistical Reports - Due February 1, 2018
2. Having the records of the church reviewed annually - Between February 1 and May 31, 2018

Beginning Friday, December 1 you may begin entering your "Statistics of the Church" report for year-end 2017. You have all of December and January to complete this report - they are due the first of February!!! To fill out the report go to <http://oga.pcusa.org/stats>. If you don't know your PIN I can help you.

If you're new to your position take heart - all of this is new to me, too, so we'll learn together! If you have any questions please contact me at lesliebeld@aol.com or 479.466.1061. If I can't immediately answer your questions I'll contact our friends in Louisville and find out.

Also, **I want to remind all Clerks of Session that all congregational records need to be reviewed annually.** This includes your church rolls and records, and your minutes of session meetings and congregational meetings. This year we will be offering multiple ways of accomplishing this task, beginning with gathering all Clerks of Session, or their representative, of a region together to review one another's records. **This regional gathering for records review needs to be scheduled between February and May.** If your region is geographically large, two such gatherings may be scheduled in different places.

I encourage Moderators/Pastors to communicate among yourselves in your region and assist in setting up a time for the records review sometime in February-May, and to also attend and take part in the review.

Thanks so much for all that you do to keep us doing things "decently and in order!" I am...

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Leslie Belden
Temporary Stated Clerk

P. S. -- the Annual Church Information Form will also be coming your way early in 2018.

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Board of Pensions Reminders

This Friday, November 17 is the last day for employees make decisions and accept benefits offered. This is an open enrollment period for employees to get into dental plan or other options offered by the Board. Employees may visit pensions.org or call the number shown below.

Important Note: All benefits will not automatically be rolled over. Only the pension, medical, and death and disability will be rolled over. If a pastor is enrolled in the optional dental plan, it will not be rolled over without completing an employer agreement. The hope is that all churches will fill out an offer of benefits and all pastors and employees will make decisions on the employer agreement.

Call to Health has been extended until November 17. There is still time to earn points for a lower deductible and for \$100.00 Amazon gift cards.

For more information go to pensions.org or call Board Resources at 1-800-773-7752.

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People and Church News

NEWS OF OUR CONGREGATIONS

--**Holiday Island Presbyterian** welcomed a bagpiper on Oct. 29 and participated in the Chamber of Commerce Halloween event.

--**Presbyterian Church of Bella Vista** enjoyed a picnic and pontoon party Oct. 8 for all who have joined church in the last year.

--**First, Van Buren** held their annual pie/silent auction fundraiser in Oct. for Habitat for Humanity.

--**First, Morrilton** youth collected change in buckets as their "noisy offering" for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance efforts for hurricane survivors in TX and FL and on Oct. 29 Reformation Sunday enjoyed a special service with beadle, crucifer, piper and sermon including liturgy by John Calvin.

--**First, Bentonville** walkers get fit, have fun and make friends Tuesdays and

Thursdays at 8 a.m. Renovated youth rooms are part of their capital campaign.

--**First, Dardanelle** resumed children's choir practice and are sharing lists of contents of clean-up buckets and hygiene kits.

--**Central, Russellville's** form for nominating church officers asked for church involvement, Christian living in daily life, personal character and skills and particular qualifications for office.

--**First, Mountain Home** celebrated "Warm someone's heart Sunday" on Nov. 5 by bringing new, portable heaters, new electric blankets and new or gently used clean blankets to be distributed.

--**First, Yellville** women focused prayers on military and law enforcement officers during November by encouraging members to take home and place prominently a toy soldier reminder.

--**First, Conway** plans a Senior Adult Ministry Breakfast Potluck on Nov. 28 and the Children's Ministry "Polar Express" party.

--**First, Arkadelphia** will sponsor a "Crafty Jesus Advent Time" during Sunday School for children and parents, followed on Dec. 10 by "Lessons and Carols" during worship.

--Pastor Bill Bailey of **Presbyterian Kirk in the Pines in Hot Springs Village** will be leading a tour of France and Geneva, Switzerland, home of the Reformation, June 11-22, 2018. Brochures with the full itinerary are available by emailing kirktour@gmail.com. You, your family and friends, are invited to accompany the group. Reservations are on a first-come basis.

NEWS OF OUR PEOPLE

--**Tamara Ochoa** has completed her service as office administrator at First, Fort Smith.

--**NiAnn Thompson**, Resourcing Director and Recording Clerk of the presbytery, has welcomed two new great grandchildren this fall. Isabel Faye Valencia was born on Sept. 9 to Rae Ann (Thompson) and Carlos Valencia in Redondo Beach, CA and Kyle Logan Furgeson was born on Oct. 20 to Brooke (Runion) and Nicholas Furgeson in Hot Springs, AR. These are NiAnn's seventh and eighth great grandchildren, respectively.

--Christian sympathy goes to **Rev. Shauna Silmon** of Commerce City, CO and Certified Christian Educator **Lynn Condra** of Fort Smith and families on the death of their sister and daughter, respectively, Marcia Silmon Coleman Rodery on Oct. 27. Shauna pastored Grace Presbyterian, Little Rock and Graham Memorial, Forrest City and Lynn served Central, Fort Smith. Marcia's memorial service was at First, Fort Smith on Nov. 3.

--Congratulations to **Revs. Lindy Vogado** and **Bobby Williamson** on the birth of their first child (a daughter, Anna Katherine Vogado Williamson) on Sunday, November 12th, 2017. Lindy is Associate Pastor at Second Presbyterian in Little Rock, where Bobby is also Parish Associate. Bobby is also a professor at Hendrix College in Conway.

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Resource Center News

by [NiAnn Thompson](#), Resourcing Director
Phone 501.663.2424, ext. 104
Monday & Wednesday, 7:45 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.



PRESBYTERY FACEBOOK PAGE

If you have events that you want the people of the Presbytery to know about, post them to our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/PresbyteryOfArkansas. Rev. Anne Russ at First, North Little Rock (Argenta) at 501.374.7677 or email revruss@gmail.com will be glad to answer your questions.

As always, inspiration was abundant when church educators gathered on Nov. 2 in Clarksville. One proposed a particularly challenging mandate to all church leaders. We are tasked with convincing busy individuals and families that the church learning and community that develop a strong, vibrant faith will serve them well through the hard times in life- - educational setbacks, financial reversals, relationships losses, health problems. Making faith development a priority over other options by participating in congregational educational and spirituality programs can and will impart the ability to survive and thrive throughout all the seasons of their lives. That is why we educators, youth and children's program directors and leaders -- whether volunteer or paid -- do what we do every day.

--With Christmas Eve falling on Sunday it's another year of preparing for the unexpected that morning in Sunday School. Why not turn to YOUR Resource Center for the loan of devotionals, books, curricula, DVDs and equipment for children, youth and adult groups? We also have items for Advent preparation and Epiphany celebration. One recommended recently was "**Songs for the Waiting: Devotions inspired by the hymns of Advent**" in 8 chapters. Choir members and music fans will be drawn to this study.

--Please act soon, requesting your Advent, Christmas or New Year's resources by Thursday, Dec. 7 since I will be out for some time for surgery on Dec. 11 and recuperation afterward.

Reminder: I am in the Resource Center on Monday and Wednesday and available by phone (cell 501.337.2360) or email other days.

(Your Resource Center receives funding from the presbytery's Mission of the Church ministry area.)

Presbytery of Arkansas Youth News

Upcoming Youth Events and Trips sponsored by the Youth Advisory Team

Youth Advisory Team Winter Meeting (location tbd) - January 19-20, 2018

Youth at Presbytery (Lyon College) - February 9-10, 2018

Sr. High Youthquake (Ferncliff) - April 13-15, 2018

Possible trip to PC(U.S.A.) General Assembly (St. Louis) - week of June 16, 2018

details are still being explored

Jr. High Jubilee (Mo Ranch, TX) - June 30-July 5, 2018

Montreat Youth Conference (Montreat, NC) - July 21-28, 2018

(These dates are also posted at www.presbyteryofarkansas.org under "Ministries," then "Youth Council.")

Want to stay updated about Youth Ministry happenings in the Presbytery?

"Like" us on Facebook!

Search

PresbyteryofArkansasYouthMinistry

on Facebook,

or go to

www.facebook.com/PresbyteryofArkansasYouthMinistry

This page is for anyone wishing to stay updated about Youth Ministry happenings in the Presbytery -- Youth Workers, parents, youth, Educators, Pastors.

(Presbytery's Youth Ministry receives funding from Presbytery's new Ministries with Youth, Young Adults, and Campus Ministry.)

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BULLETIN FROM MISSION OF THE CHURCH MINISTRY AREA: LAST CALL FOR EVANGELISM GRANTS

Four grants of up to \$400 each are being offered to congregations desiring to improve upon or create avenues to evangelize. These grants can be for signage, advertising, a website or website improvements, a special invitation to your neighborhood to attend worship, etc. You have good news to share in your communities, and with the help of a grant from the presbytery, you can do it.

To apply, contact the moderator of Mission of the Church Ministry Area by email: ktpearson@suddenlink.net. Please include in your email a brief description of the project, how much the whole project will cost, how much (up to \$400) is being requested, and how specifically the funds will be utilized. Requests should be authorized by the local church Session. If you have questions, you may contact CRE Kelly Pearson. The deadline to receive requests is December 1. Ideally, if your congregation has applied for and received a grant to attend NEXT Church or Big Tent conferences or a grant from the Unified Mission Emphasis in 2017, you might allow other congregations to apply.

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Vera Lloyd Turkey Trot--November 18th

You can help boys and girls at Vera Lloyd Presbyterian Family Services and earn a cool T-shirt by being part of the Vera Lloyd Turkey Trot 5K events. You are invited to learn how to change the life of a child in need by being part of the Turkey Trot 5K.

Turkey Trot 5K run/walk and one mile fun for kids

Saturday, November 18, 9 a.m.

One mile fun run immediately after 5K

**Annie B. Wells Campus of Vera Lloyd Presbyterian Family Services
745 Old Warren Road
Monticello, AR US 71655**

Registration for the Turkey Trot 5K and the Fun Run closes on Wednesday, November 15th.

Visit VeraLloyd.org or call 501-666-8195 for more information.

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Prayer List for Congregations -- 2017 can be found [here](#).

Prayer List for Congregations -- 2018 can be found [here](#).

(Note: some web browsers may require you to press and hold the "Ctrl" key while you click the link to reach the linked website).

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[Presbytery Calendar](#)

PRESBYTERY STAFF:

General Presbyter [STEWART SMITH](#)

Temporary Stated Clerk [LESLIE BELDEN](#)

Resourcing Director [NIANN THOMPSON](#)

Director of Mission Support [KENNETH RICH](#)

Staff Resource for Youth [BRITTON VARN](#)
Staff Resource for Vital Congregations [MICHAEL VINSON](#)
Treasurer [BOB BOEHMLER](#)
Moderator of Presbytery [RUTH HAMILTON](#)
Moderator of the Coordinating Team [LACY SELLARS](#)
Vice Moderator of Presbytery [LESLIE ROPER](#)

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The Presbytery of Arkansas is a council 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 12,000 Presbyterians gathered in 83 active churches, a new church development and one ministry 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>

Presbytery of Arkansas, 9221 N. Rodney Parham Rd., Little Rock, AR 72227