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December 2011

# The Banner

Newsletter of the Presbytery of Arkansas



## In Touch

by General Presbyterian Rev. Dr. William F. Galbraith

Hope for Real

Double clicking my way through the computer-matched list of possible candidates for our several pastor-seeking churches, my "inbox" binged. The message: an invitation from our friend, Karen, to join CarePage, a way to stay in touch with those facing medical treatment. It was personal. She said, "It'll take some of the pressure off not having to make phone calls and do personal emails, but I'll likely need some support."



Karen was diagnosed with breast cancer over five years ago. She underwent arduous treatment then and, we thought, "Well, that's that!" We shared her hope that her five-year non-recurrence window meant she was in the clear. It would stay open. Sadly, it did not. At five years and one month, a new biopsy has indicated another form of cancer seemingly unrelated to the first. So, Karen and her husband, Jack, are awaiting word on a treatment plan for the next round of their battle.

Word came on this first Sunday of Advent. Word came when many churches focused attention on being awake, wide-eyed for the One coming, when the word reminded us that we don't know when God's chosen One will show up. Word came from Karen on the Sunday when we had heard scripture encourage us to stay on the alert because we have reason for hope. Karen's invitation brings both being ready and hopeful into sharp focus, much the same way the Advent scripture does. No one knows the hour when some terribly personal shock will come. Yet, hope keeps us breathing when our hearts jump into our throats.

It would be hollow to try to cheer Karen up. She's too matter of fact. Works for NASA as a rocket scientist, deals with data, depends on accuracy. But, now, a caveat. There's nothing wrong with being optimistic. I'm in favor of being positive. So don't hear this as dishing a cheerful spirit. Optimistic cheeriness, however, is far from hope. Plus, it's usually spouted by those who haven't had biopsies that mean more surgery, more chemo, more radiation. Optimism is that shallow pool that evaporates when the heat's on and nothing much goes our way. In real life, like Karen's, medical check-ups don't always go the way we want. But that's when hope trumps mere optimism. Hope stares cancer in the face, recognizes its malevolence and believes, in spite of its nastiness, that not even cancer can strip away hope in the One who climbed on the bars of death to declare our last enemy forever dethroned.

As we move further into Advent, will you welcome hope? Hope with me that Karen will know she cannot be separated from God's love? Will you also remember that the hope for Karen is for you and me as well because none of us knows the hour either? What we can claim for sure is that while optimism may fizzle, hope endures. It is not ours to create, only ours to receive, an Advent gift we need and are freely offered even here, even now.

Hopefully yours,  
[Bill](#)

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## **A Polity Point** by Rev. Cathy Ulrich, Stated Clerk

During this season we read the story of Mary & Joseph and their journey to Bethlehem. They were on their way in order to be registered.

We see Advent as a journey to prepare to welcome the Christ child.

We see this as an opportunity to take account and register after a fashion.

The congregations and minister members of the presbytery have been sent forms and work sheets to assist in filing the [Session Annual Statistical Report](#), the [Clergy Salary Worksheet](#), the [Church Personnel Form](#), and [Clerk's Annual Questionnaire](#).



Completing and returning these forms is part of our covenant understanding as a connectional church.

Questions or concerns about this responsibility may be directed to the Stated Clerk (501.663.2424. X208)

Thank you for participating in this journey.  
Blessings of Advent,  
[Cathy](#)

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## **Lyon College, Batesville to Host 119th Stated Meeting of Presbytery Friday-Saturday, February 17-18, 2012**

3:30 p.m. Friday, February 17, Registration opens and Pre-Presbytery Workshops

Dinner on your own

6:30 p.m. Presbytery convenes for opening business and workshops with the evening ending with a reception in Lyon Building Rotunda

8:30 a.m. Saturday, February 18, presbytery reconvenes for workshop, worship and business, and continues until after lunch on campus

Guest speakers at this meeting will be Dr. David Jones from Austin Seminary and Andrew Black from Constitutional Services. Installation of 2012 Presbytery Moderator Rev. David Dyer will be part of the worship service along with the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at 9:45 a.m. Saturday. Youth Advisory Delegates in grades 9 through 12 are invited to the February presbytery meeting. Worship offering recipient will be the Lyon College Presbytery of Arkansas scholarship.

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## **2012 Committee Moderators Meet**



The moderators of the 2012 Presbytery committees met together on December 1 and were hosted by General Council and Presbytery Moderator Sam Highsmith. Pictured are (from left) Ruling Elder Julie Agee Gillaspy, Nominations; Teaching Elder David Dyer, Presbytery Moderator-elect; Teaching Elder Randi Henderson, Congregational Care & Development; Teaching Elder Guy Delaney, Administration; Ruling Elder Linda LeBron, Christian Education & Nurture; Ruling Elder Led Davis, Representation; Teaching Elder Bill Bailey, Ministry; Ruling Elder Elizabeth Branch, Disaster Preparedness and Response; Ruling Elder Cissy Rose, Presbyterian Women Coordinating Team; Ruling Elder Highsmith (General Council Moderator-elect); Teaching Elder Gordon Garlington, Mission; Teaching Elder Jeff Cranton, Preparation for Ministry; and General Presbyter Bill Galbraith. Not pictured are Ruling Elder Marty Shepherd, Care & Nurture of Church Professionals; and Ruling Elder Al Glover, Clusters.

### **Outgoing Committee Moderators Thanked**

by Presbytery Moderator [Sam Highsmith](#)

On behalf of the Presbytery of Arkansas, I would like to express our appreciation to the following Committee Moderators who are leaving office at the end of the year:

Ruling Elder John Alderson, Graham Memorial, Forrest City - Cmte. on Nominations

Rev. Catherine Allsbury, Member-at-large, Little Rock - Cmte. on Representation

Ruling Elder Jeannie Ford, Second, Little Rock - Cmte. on Christian Education & Nurture

Rev. Debra Carl Freeman, First, Jacksonville - General Council

Rev. Susan Gray, Mountainburg Presbyterian - Cmte. on Care & Nurture of Church Professionals

Rev. Jeff Price, Trinity, Little Rock - Cmte. on Preparation for Ministry



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## People and Church News

### News of Our People

- Christian sympathy goes to Maxine Loomans and the family of Rev. Kenneth John Loomans, 83, an honorably retired minister member of the Presbytery of Arkansas, residing in Loveland, Colorado. A native of Wisconsin, Loomans graduated from Denver Seminary and served churches in Colorado, Wisconsin and Illinois before retiring and moving to Arkansas in 1991 where he was pastor of First, Ozark and temporary supply at First, Mount Ida. He had most recently lived in Hot Springs.
- Christian sympathy goes to Bruce Schlegel of Fayetteville on the death of his mother, Mary V. Schlegel, on November 7. Her service was held at First United, Fayetteville on November 10. Bruce is the commissioned ruling elder at Walnut Grove Presbyterian, Farmington and Cane Hill Presbyterian Church.
- Christian sympathy goes to Revs. David and Patty Schaller on the death of his sister, Dr. Jana Angeles, on December 2. Her service will be held at Second Presbyterian, Little Rock on December 10 at 4:00 p.m. with a reception to follow.

### News of Our Congregations

- Central Presbyterian, Russellville is conducting an Advent study based on African American spirituals on Tuesday nights and Thursday mornings.
- First, Springdale celebrated the 10th anniversary of Rev. Stewart Smith's arrival as their pastor with a program by the children's choir.
- Kirk of the Hills, Fairfield Bay marked their 30th year on November 19 with a dinner program.
- First, Siloam Springs created and distributed Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets to those in need in the community.
- Good Shepherd Presbyterian, Greenwood held a service of lessons and carols on the first Sunday night of Advent, November 27.
- Kirk in the Pines, Hot Springs Village and a chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution presented all veterans with flag pins and ribbons on November 5 and 6.
- First, Batesville is sending care packages for final exam time to their college students along with notes of support and encouragement.
- First, Conway offers Taize services on Sunday nights during Advent.
- Wynne Presbyterian decorates with poinsettias donated in memory or honor of loved ones.
- Park Hill Presbyterian, North Little Rock Presbyterian Women collected Christmas gifts for women patients at University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in November.
- First, Dardanelle honored Elder Betsy Harris with a potluck dinner and a gift Bible commentary on her graduation from the Presbytery's lay academy.
- First, Yellville is preparing goodie packages for personnel in the Armed Services. They also hosted the Marion County Ministerial Alliance Community Thanksgiving Service.
- Presbyterian Church of Bella Vista collected 317 sweaters for the Salvation Army in a drive coordinated by the Martha Garvin circle.
- Graham Memorial, Forrest City will host "A Song & A Son Tour" on Sunday, January 22 at 2:00 p.m. Call 870.633.4424 for more information. The event is free with a love offering to be taken up.

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## Longtime Little Rock Pastor Dies

Richard Bladworth Hardie Jr., pastor emeritus at Westover Hills Presbyterian, Little Rock, died November 29 in Little Rock at the age of 89. "Preacher Dick," as he was called by three generations of parishioners, was born in Dallas and served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. After graduating from Austin College, he attended Union Seminary in Richmond, Virginia. Hardie was the first minister of Westover Hills Presbyterian and served as pastor for 36 years. He was a prominent civil rights leader in integrating Little Rock schools. In 1985, Preacher Dick retired and completed a term as moderator of the Presbytery of Arkansas.

In retirement Hardie served as director of church relations for Austin College and then as interim pastor at First, Little Rock; Park Hill Presbyterian, North Little Rock; St. Andrews Presbyterian, Little Rock and other churches.

Dr. Hardie is survived by his wife of 27 years, Carolyn; his children, Richard B. Hardie III and Celeste White; Kathleen Hardie and Joseph Stenger, their children Bret and Patrick and his wife Becky and daughter Arabel; Elizabeth and Ted James, their children Will and Katherine. He is also survived by Ellen McEwen, her children Josh Minter, Jesse Minter and wife Rachelle; Debbie Cooper; Melissa and Tim Stillings and children Haley and Gregory; Matthew and Mandy McEwen, their children Peyton and Sydney; and his sister, Mary Frances Martin and her husband Bill.

A memorial service will be held at Westover Hills Presbyterian Church at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 11. The family asks that memorials be made to Westover Hills Presbyterian, Alzheimer's Arkansas or Odyssey Hospice.

**Prayer List for Congregations - 2011** can be found [here](#).  
**Prayer List for Congregations - 2012** can be found [here](#).

## Making an Impression

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

I recently attended the annual Middle Council Financial Officers meeting hosted by General Assembly. A record 120 participants from presbyteries and synods were in attendance.

Topics included "Revitalizing the Gift of Generosity," "Managing Church Politics and Financial Policy" and "Nonprofit Practices, Church Law and Taxes."

Presentations were made on financial decision making, trends in mid councils, and following audit principles. General Assembly programs were presented and discussed, as were those of the Presbyterian Foundation and the Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program.

Time was spent hearing how presbyteries of different sizes were changing to meet new challenges. (There's that "change" word again!)

Near the end of the meeting one gentleman stood and said "I'm just an Elder on a stewardship committee and didn't know what to expect when I came here, but I do know what I'm leaving with after listening to all of you. Hope."

It reminds me that we're all in this together.

End of year reminders:

- Please check with your Treasurer to make sure that your pledge has been paid in full.
- To Committee/Commission/Council Moderators and Members: Please return your signed check request vouchers as approved by the Moderator by Wednesday, December 14 for any expenses incurred this year.
- Inclement weather policy: The Presbytery Office will be closed when Little Rock schools are closed.
- The Presbytery Office will be closed Thursday, December 22 - Monday, January 2.



## Save the Date

### "A New Journey Begins"

#### Northwest Arkansas Cluster Confirmation Retreat

February 3-4 (Friday 7:00 p.m. - Saturday 2:00 p.m.)

United Campus Ministry Center, 902 W. Maple St., Fayetteville

Cost: \$20/youth Registration forms will be sent in early January, deadline is January 20th.

For more information: Kristi Button [kbutton@fupcfay.org](mailto:kbutton@fupcfay.org) or Mary Shaw [mshaw59@cox.net](mailto:mshaw59@cox.net)

### Arkansas Presbyterian Pilgrimage (formerly Cursillo)

April 26-29

Fernclyff Camp & Conference Center

More information is available [here](#).

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

### Presbyterian Women News

can be found [here](#).

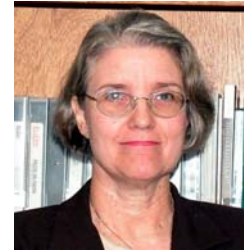
*(The PW Coordinating Team receives funding in the Presbytery budget.)*

### [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.



### LAST MINUTE ADVENT, CHRISTMAS AND EPIPHANY RESOURCES to use on December 18, 25 or January 1

- **"How Can I Celebrate Advent?"** (Acc. #DVD9498) combines live-action puppets, illustrations and 3-D computer animation for 27 minutes to explain the special season of waiting and preparation for the coming Savior. For very young children.
- **"A Thrill of Hope: The Christmas Story in Word and Art"** (Acc. #DVD9581 or 9590) contains a 50-minute DVD illustrated by the artwork of John August Swanson (A Visit, the Nativity, The Shepherds, Epiphany, Presentation in the Temple and Flight into Egypt) with commentary from faculty at Candler School of Theology plus a discussion guide. For adults or older youth.
- **"Veggie Tales: The Little Drummer Boy"** (Acc. #DVD9584) is a 45-minute animated DVD on the holiday classic song/story which asks "When it seems you have nothing to bring...What gift can you give the King?" For younger children.
- **"Veggie Tales It's a Meaningful Life: A Lesson in Being Content"** (Acc. #DVD9475) retells the story of the holiday classic movie It's a Wonderful Life when animated Stewart is given the chance to have the life he always thought he wanted as a big football hero. For children of all ages.
- **"Mystery of the Three Kings"** (Acc. #DVD9458) is a 105-minute public television DVD which retraces the steps of the Wise Men and how their trip influenced every aspect of the Christmas story from the time of the Church Fathers to today. For adults or older youth.

### Good seasonal advice borrowed from 'Ideas' magazine

If you are part of a large family, consider drawing names for a gift exchange. Participate in an alternative gift-giving opportunity where you give money to charities in people's honor. Keep the number of parties you attend and host to a minimum. Remember that the Christmas season continues until Epiphany, January 6.

### Popular Congregational Mission Studies may start your new church year out right

Descriptions and free downloads are available from the Evangelism and Church Growth programs of the PC(USA) at <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/starting-new-initiatives/>  
**"Better Together: The Future of Presbyterian Mission"** (Acc. #BK9470) by Sherron George or  
**"Embracing God's World: 2nd Edition, Involving the Congregation in Mission"** are two books from the denomination in YOUR Resource Center that would aid in congregational mission studies.

### Special wishes for a joyful Advent to all the patrons of the Resource Center from the Resource Center Advisory Council!

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

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### [Presbytery Calendar](#)

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#### 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](#)

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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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