

Joining Christ in the world, the Presbytery of South Louisiana strengthens congregations, empowers leaders, and impacts communities.

OCTOBER, 2011



LEADERSHIP LETTER

Presbytery of South Louisiana

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The 119th Stated Meeting
Presbytery of South Louisiana

Saturday

October 15, 2011

9:00am – 5:00pm



Highland Presbyterian Church

10024 Highland Rd.

Baton Rouge, LA 70810

Phone: 225-766-5775



PROJECT HOMECOMING

BY: Marta Jewson

Six years after the storm, New Orleans is dealing with a different kind of recovery. The gutting has been done but some people fell victim to contractor fraud, others have yet to navigate through paperwork or are waiting for adjustments to Road Home grants. Needless to say there is still work to be done; the homes left are often the most difficult cases, many times with no private funds to assist in the rebuilding process.

The Presbytery of South Louisiana was awarded a grant to support ten full-time and two part-time AmeriCorps to work with Project Homecoming for the 2011-12 term. In addition, two Young Adult Volunteers have also committed a year of their time to work with Project Homecoming to aid with the continuing recovery efforts in New Orleans. Of these po-

sitions five are returning staff. Project Homecoming will welcome weekly volunteers again in October, after the one month hiatus devoted to construction training.

As of September 2010 there were 43,755 blighted or empty residential lots in New Orleans, according to the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center. Project Homecoming has recognized this need and shifted its services over the last few years to address the long term recovery of the crescent city.

Project Homecoming received a \$1 million grant from the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority by way of the federally funded Neighborhood Stabilization Program. This money will be used to build eight new homes and rebuild six homes. The lots were selected based on census tracts that have been deemed vulnerable. The money will also target homeowners making 80 percent of Area Median Income or lower. Project Homecoming is building resilient communities with these energy-efficient and storm resistant

homes.

The Presbytery of South Louisiana has been planning to spinoff Project Homecoming as a separate nonprofit entity. On August 26, 2011 Project Homecoming, Inc. received notice from the IRS that its application for tax exempt status had been granted. This sets the stage for the presbytery to work with Project Homecoming, Inc. on the spinoff. A plan for the spinoff will be presented to Presbytery at the October meeting. As a separate 501 (c)3 organization, Project Homecoming will have greater ability to apply for grants and build resilient neighborhoods while maintaining ties to the Presbytery, as at least half of Project Homecoming's board members are nominated by PSL. With independent non-profit status, Project Homecoming will continue to build resilient communities in the New Orleans area for years to come.

MISSION STATEMENT

*In the service of Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit
We will promote the spiritual, mental & physical health of our congregations, Minister-Members, Christian Educators and other Church Professionals;
We will help our congregations to carry out their missions and connect them to each other as well as to the larger Church, and
We will coordinate and execute those ministries specific to the Presbytery.
All that we do is dedicated to the Glory of God.*

THE GREAT ENDS OF THE CHURCH:

The great ends of the Church are the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind; the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God; the maintenance of divine worship; the preservation of the truth; the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world. (Book of Order G-1.0200)

REPORT FROM A “Partner in Christ’s Service”

*“Called as partners in Christ’s service,
Called to ministries of grace, . . .”*

What does it mean to be a Presbyterian?

Last month I digressed from reporting on a specific mission and looked at the three bodies of the Presbytery of South Louisiana that we represent in all the work we do. I digress again to look at what it means to be a member of our denomination.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a long and proud history. There have been many splits and mergers and reunions. Discussing these is the prerogative of historians. Our form of government is the subject for polity specialists. What is the basic, fundamental, unequivocal foundation of our denomination as the Body of Christ?

THE MARKS OF THE CHURCH

The Unity of the Church

The Holiness of the Church

The Catholicity of the Church

The Apostolicity of the Church

The subjects are familiar. You will recognize the Nicene Creed. (fully described in the Book of Order F-1.0302, pg 2)

THE NOTES OF THE REFORMED CHURCH

The Word of God is truly preached and heard

The Sacraments are rightly administered

Ecclesiastical discipline is uprightly ministered

Sounds like the writings of the French attorney John Calvin. It should because it is.

Perhaps you prefer the Scots Confession.

Proclaims and hears the Word of God

Administers and receives the Sacraments

Nurtures a covenant community of disciples of Christ

(see the Book of Order F-1.0303, pg 4)

THE GREAT ENDS OF THE CHURCH

The proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind

The shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God

The maintenance of divine worship

The preservation of the truth

The promotion of social righteousness

The exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world

This statement originated in the United Presbyterian Church of North America in 1910. (see the Book of Order F-1.0304, pg 5)

So, here in a “bullet list” is a concise description of what it means to be a Presbyterian. Clearly we are partners in Christ’s service.

**More from individual “Partners in Christ’s Service”
as their reports arrive.**

OCTOBER

Birthdays

Mr. Dick Wuensch	1
Ms. Nanette Cagney	3
Rev. Ted Roeling	4
Rev. Steve Kim	8
Rev. Dr. Wallace Carr	9
Rev. Jan Coulter	9
Rev. Dick Krajewski	9
Rev. Gaylord Dodgen	10
Rev. Dr. Alan Cutter	11
Rev. Hawley Wolfe	12
Rev. Dr. Ron Sutto	14
Rev. David Pussman	19
Rev. Dr. John Spaulding	30

Calendar

14	Presbyterian Women's - Retreat
16	
15	Presbytery Meeting
31	Halloween

Happy  Halloween



Please Keep In Your Prayers:

Mike Tucker, son of PSL Treasurer Tom Tucker, as he recovers from a head injury

Interim General Presbyter and Stated Clerk,
Rev. Ron Sutto for safe travels

Leslie and Erich Mansell, as they deal with health issues of family members

For all those struggling with financial issues during the down economy

Mark your calendar:

Nov. 2 FMT Meeting @ PSL Office

Nov. 11 Veteran's Day

Nov. 17 COM Meeting @ PSL Office

Nov. 24- PSL Office Closed
25 Happy Thanksgiving!

2012 PRESBYTERY MEETING DATES:

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28TH
SCOTLANDVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

TUESDAY, JUNE 5TH
LAKEVIEW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13TH
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ALEXANDRIA

Don't Go To Church; Be The Church!

By Rev. John Blewitt
Pastor, Faith Presbyterian Church
Moderator of PSL

On Sunday, September 11, the congregation of Faith Presbyterian (Baton Rouge) did something I could not have imagined doing even a few short years ago. We cancelled Sunday worship and went out into our community to serve and bless our neighbors.

We are not the first church to do this. The Jericho Road church outside of Chicago, for example, does a service Sunday every month. But I had never heard of Presbyterians taking such a radical step. That is until I learned that Grace Presbyterian, in Lafayette, had done this not once but twice, and with very positive results.

I began to dream . . . *what if* . . .

This summer marked the tenth anniversary of Faith. In 2001, two congregations (Sherwood and Covenant) merged. Tom Bandy suggested that we give a reverse birthday present to celebrate. Instead of getting a present for our birthday, we would give a present to our community. I proposed the service Sunday to our session, and we decided to move forward with the plan. It is consistent with the transformation process we have been engaged in the past few years. We are working to turn our church *inside out*. We want our focus to shift way from from ourselves and toward our neighbors. God has blessed us richly; our blessings are meant to be shared with others. As good Presbyterians, we are convinced that we have been predestined (elected, chosen) to salvation, AND commissioned to join in God's work to save and redeem all creation.

We were ready to schedule the service Sunday one week after our Tenth Anniversary celebration, but then I discovered that there was a resource to help a congregation prepare for this unusual event. The resource is a four week focus on Jesus' call to his followers to serve, bless, and heal others. The materials provided daily devotions and weekly small group discussions as well as the theme of Sunday worship services. The focus of these gospel studies have helped me and others raise our awareness of opportunities to notice and respond to others in need. (putyourfaithination.org)

When we realized that our Faith In Action Sunday would fall on the tenth anniversary of the terrorist attacks on our country, we had a deep sense that this would be an excellent way to demonstrate our commitment to the Prince of Peace. As followers of Jesus, we are not to seek vengeance, but to love our enemies and work for the well-being of all.

We decided on three projects for our members and friends to choose from:

- Painting and sprucing up at Twin Oaks Elementary School (very close to our church)
- A visit to a Regency Place, the nursing home nearest our facility
- Taking plastic shopping bags and turning them into mats for the homeless

We were blessed to have two groups of young people from outside of our church family join us for this project. The youth group from Broadmoor Presbyterian church seeks to do one mission project every month. When the youth leader learned of our plans, he asked if his group could join in. We were delighted to accept the offer! Also, several members of the Beta Club at Baton Rouge Magnet High came and helped. Beta Club members have helped us with our Summer Reading Program the last two summers, and volunteered to support this endeavor.

We gathered in our sanctuary at 9:00 A.M. for a brief devotional time. We acknowledged the special day, and I shared a pledge I recently signed online:

As a Christian and an American, on the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks I commit myself to work for building peace in my community and the world, and to love my neighbors by standing against hate and fear.

We had a prayer then deployed the three teams to their project sites.

The response has been very gratifying, especially from folks (including our youth helpers) outside of our congregation. One of the Beta Club members exclaimed, "This is awesome! Do you guys do this every week?" The Twin Oaks principal and the faculty who joined us were most appreciative. Down the street at the nursing home, lots of new friends were made.

No, we do not do a Faith in Action/service Sunday every week; this was our very first time. But we want to find ways to regularly make a difference in our community.

I plan to invite other local congregations to join us the next time we do this. Imagine what good things could happen if one Sunday morning all the churches in our community sent teams out into the neighborhood to perform acts of service and kindness to make God's love manifest in very real ways!

So here is a challenge: let's not go to church; let's be the church!



C.O.M.◇community

John Wamsley
Member of COM

John Wamsley here. Pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church in Lafayette. I'm not going to talk about the denomination or the presbytery or the NFOG or 10-A or that kind of stuff. Let's talk about Leadership for the Leadership Letter and let's talk about "WHO THEY HAVE TO LISTEN TO".

I. CHANGED PEOPLE

The world cannot ignore *changed people*, people who radically alter the way they do life. You can call a changed life coincidental, but you can't call it unimpressive. Simon Peter healed a cripple at the Temple Gate. The skeptics were confounded. They knew the guy. They had passed him daily for years. There he stood, whole. But they were just as confounded by Simon Peter. They knew him, too. He was the one who had made all the noise about his allegiance to Jesus and then fled. But this time he couldn't be bluffed. He was different. One powerfully lived life cancels a multitude of rational arguments.

BRAVE PEOPLE

They have to listen to *brave people*-- those who risk, those who stand up and take it. Peter, James, and John - all former cowards--suddenly became un-cowed. When they were told to shut up, they said, "You can decide whether you think we should heed you or God. We've decided to keep on speaking." This was no Sunday School debate. Their lives were on the line. But they kept telling what they'd seen and heard (Acts 4:13-20) You have to notice people you can't threaten. Who have guts; they are NUTS (Never underestimate the Spirit)

PEOPLE WITH SCARS

They have to listen to *people with scars*...people who've been there. The world isn't waiting with bated breath to hear what Kierkegaard said about worship. And the world doesn't lie awake nights pondering what Moses did to the Jesusites. They don't have to listen to secondhand opinions. They do have to listen to thought to people who've been there and can show their scars

GENEROUS PEOPLE

They have to listen to generous people. People who defy the god mammon. People who are thankful. People who are grateful. People who prayerfully and privately invest in eternity. John Spaulding would add "hilarious, joyful givers." Jesus said you can find a person's heart in their giving - Matt 6:21)

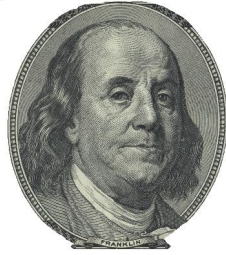
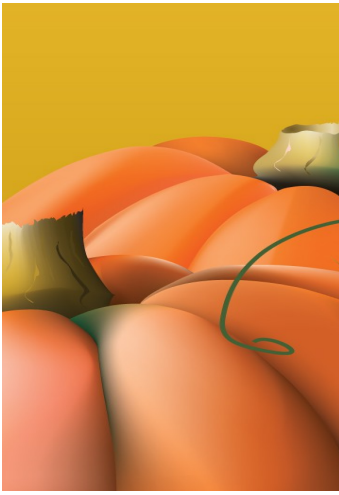
RADIANT PEOPLE

They have to listen to radiant people. It's the something referred to in Acts when the writer said that great grace was upon them all (Acts 4:33). Mega-karis, mega-grace - people radiate that if they have it. It can't be ignored. D.M. Stanley, the agnostic reporter who went to find Dr. Livingstone in Africa, said, "If I had stayed with Livingstone much longer, I would have been compelled to become a Christian, although he never mentioned a word of his faith to me. They have to listen to radiant people. Some of us, (yikes!?!)- you get the feeling that some of us were baptized with insect repellent.

So Presbyterian leaders and servants...Let's be the kind of Jesus followers that people have to listen to....and do the Bandy: Be a blessing to our churches and communities. Show and tell "what is it about our experience with Jesus Christ that the world has to hear"

Romans 15:13 -
Thankfully His,

John Wamsley



WHERE IN THE TREASURY IS BENJAMIN? (Episode 10)

(Lights down from white wash out to normal)

Benjamin is in the familiar surroundings of the PSL Operating Fund. Jay is motioning him to hurry along. He rushes by expense reports. That looks like IRS forms over there, he says to himself.

“See anyone on this list you know?” Jay asks.

“Yeah,” Benjamin points to a name. There are several columns of figures on the list. Benjamin reads a few: Hourly, Salaried, Withholding, OASDI, Medicare. “Hey this is Staff Expenses isn’t it? And, you’re preparing payroll, right?”

“Right on,” Jay acknowledges.

“Wow, thanks, this is exactly the kind of thing I wanted to fund. Not many people on this list. Guess that is because PSL operates on a skeleton staff.”

“Yeah, yeah,” Jay says hastily. “Now get in that line over there . . . quickly.”

“Going to make me into a check now?”

“Nope, going to send you out by electronic transfer. Then you’ll be made into a check. Have a good trip. And, thanks for your service.”

Where in the Treasury is Benjamin? (Thought I’d forgot to ask didn’t you?) Benjamin is on his way to the offsite payroll processing service.

* * * * *

Benjamin has left PSL at long last. We hope you have enjoyed his trip through the Treasury. You can personally visit each of the places Benjamin did. They are published in the PSL Financial Statements which are posted before every stated meeting of the Presbytery of South Louisiana.

One last thought: Benjamin is in a payroll check again, this time to a PSL employee who happens to be a member of a PCUSA Church. That person contributes a monthly pledge to that Church which has a budgeted giving plan to PSL. Is it possible Benjamin might show up again at PSL?

HAPPY HALLOWEEN!