

# Highlights

## of the Presbytery of Western Kentucky

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William Walton, Editor

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### ***PRESBYTERY HIGHLIGHTS***



The Presbytery of Western Kentucky met at the Mt. Zion Presbyterian Church, Central City, Kentucky, on Tuesday, May 9, 2006. The opening worship service was led by host pastor, Commissioned Lay Pastor, Jim Brown. The Rev. Matthew Covington, Bowling Green, preached on the text from Acts 8:26-40 and John 3:8. The theme of the sermon was "Leadership of the Spirit" and was titled "Found in Azotus." Peter was called to baptize the Ethiopian eunuch and there immediately found himself in Azotus. It is the post Easter, post Pentecost unleashing of God's powers. "Azotus" is the darkest place to go to -- the toughest place to be in. We are reminded that the spirit gifts for ministry is always for getting that ministry done. "What is preventing you from doing what we are called to do?"

Moderator Ann Marie Montgomery and Executive Rich Cooper led in a service of retirement for Rev. J. Douglas Blair, Henderson. Doug has served churches in Alabama and Florida and for the last 20 years at Henderson. Doug offered the benediction at the close of the service.

Commissioners to the 217<sup>th</sup> General Assembly were commissioned by a service led by Rich Cooper. Present were Principal Minister Matthew Covington, Principal Elder Helen Jordan, Alternate

Minister Jon Faraone and Alternate Elder David Dossett. Youth Delegate Jonathan Davis was not present.

### **Changes in the Manual for Administrative Operations**

A change was approved regarding the "Stated Clerk." The change makes clear the nomination process for the Associate Stated Clerk and the duties of the Stated Clerk and Associate Stated Clerk.

### **Leadership Development**

A POINT person (Presbyterian Organized in Nurture and Training) is a resource person for our congregations. The POINT representative in Western Kentucky is Lorna Loeffler, Director of Christian Education, First Presbyterian Church, 200 N. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Paducah, KY 42001. Phone number is 270/442-3545; Email: [decelj1@hotmail.com](mailto:decelj1@hotmail.com)

There were 25 Senior Highs and 35 Junior Highs who attended the spring retreat at Camp Kum Ba Ya. David Montgomery, MOTA (Ministry Open To All) and Sharon Murray were the leaders.

### **Mississippi**

This June we will be taking 35 or so youth and adults to Gulfport, Mississippi, to help rebuild in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. We will

be working with the Presbytery of Mississippi and staying at Westminster Presbyterian Church. Please keep us in your prayers as we prepare for and go on our trip. Also, please continue to pray for that region as they head again into hurricane season.

### City Sights

Our middle school mission trip is heading to Hopkinsville, June 20-22. This three day mission trip is an excellent time for our middle schoolers to learn about local missions, make friends around the Presbytery, learn more about God's call to service, and have fun while working hard. Registration is due by June 1. Remember that each participating church must have an adult for every six youth it sends.

### Youth Council

The next Youth Council meeting is June 9-10 at Sturgis.

We invite everyone to come to the August Presbytery meeting. As part of the Leadership Development Committee's report, we will present a slide show from all of our summer activities. I hope you will come and support the youth in all they do.

## **Committee on Ministry**

Kendal Land was dismissed to the Presbytery of Arkansas.

Sharon Murray was ordained and installed at First Presbyterian Church, Sturgis, on March 19<sup>th</sup>.

Rev. J. Douglas Blair was granted honorable retirement, effective June 1, 2006.

Rev. Tim Davis is the interim minister for the First Presbyterian Church, Greenville.

## **Presbyterian Women**

Presbyterian Women of Western Kentucky met for our spring gathering at First Presbyterian Church, Madisonville, on April 8 with 73 members in

attendance. The new coordinating team was installed and we enjoyed a presentation by Barbara Snyder of Versailles, Kentucky. Barbara spoke of her travels in Brazil with the 2005 Global Exchange. After lunch we honored those members who died in 2005 and celebrated communion.

As our year comes to a close we find the biggest thing on the horizon is the Churchwide Gathering to take place in Louisville July 7-11. There are many things to offer information and fellowship. For example: Did you know that we are observing the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fellowship of the Least Coin? We will experience the global community through encounters with our Global Partners and ecumenical guests. We will hear God's word through Bible study with Dale Lindsay Morgan and find light for the journey in news from Forbearance Presbyterian Church. Necessities for that journey include shoes and socks. Bring new children's shoes and socks in self-closing plastic bags; please write the size of the shoes on an index card or piece of paper at least 3"x 5". In celebration of the Decade of the Child these will be distributed to agencies that meet basic needs for children. If there are women in your congregation who cannot attend ask if they would like to send shoes and socks with you as their way of participating from home. If there is no one from your congregation going you can get the shoes to me or check with the youth of your church – they may be going to Louisville on Thursday, July 6<sup>th</sup> to stuff the tote bags. There is scholarship money available to anyone who wishes to attend the gathering, contact Debbie McCoy for information.

The Creative Ministries Offering Committee met in March and approved grants totaling \$860,686.00 from the 2005 Thank Offering. Of 108 proposals, 47 projects were selected, 26 in the United States and 21 international. For more information, visit the Presbyterian Women website at [www.pcusa.org/pw](http://www.pcusa.org/pw) or read about the recipients in the July/August Horizons magazine.

The Mission Relationships Committee urges women's groups and congregations to participate in the 2006 Offering of Letters. Go to [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org) or Bread for the World, 50 F St. N.W., Suite 500,

Washington, DC 20001 for more information. The purpose is to support hunger-fighting legislation in Congress.

## **Rich Cooper, Presbytery Executive Report**

The joy of the Carroll Family for the birth of Zoe was noted.

A web site prepared by Dale Davis and hosted by Craig Winstead, Madisonville, is up and running. Visit: [www.wkypresbytery.org](http://www.wkypresbytery.org)

Churches are encouraged to offer the financial and prayer support for the Living Waters for the World Western Kentucky project in Guatemala.

Information was shared regarding the transition of General Assembly offices in Louisville as a new way to do business as a church. Of the 55 missionaries reported as being dismissed, 40 were by retirement and the location was no longer considered a priority. The positive side is that all of us are in business to do something else tomorrow.

Representatives from all the presbyteries in the Synod recently met in Franklin, Tennessee to discuss the future of Campus Ministry. David Montgomery and Rich Cooper attended.

## **Committee on Thanks**

Larry Isakson reported for the committee. He remarked on the beautiful morning and being met at Mt. Zion with open arms by Jim Brown and David Dossett.

Matthew Covington presented an inspiring message.

The delegates to General Assembly were commissioned and a service to honor the retirement of Rev. J. Douglas Blair was held.

It was evident from the reports that the committees of Presbytery were doing their work and that the youth are active.

The food for lunch, table decorations and dessert was excellent.

Bellewood is to be complimented for what they do with special needs children.

Rich Cooper is to be thanked for his work and thank God for our lives for each and every one of us.

The committee concluded the report by having all sing "God Be With You Till We Meet Again," accompanied by Bell Muth.

## **Joys & Concerns**

Bill Walton expressed the joy of helping with Hurricane Katrina Relief and wearing the Presbyterian Disaster Services t-shirt. A lady in New Orleans identified herself as a Presbyterian and said she did not know the church was doing this, but thanked us for being present.

On May 21<sup>st</sup> Joyce and Bill Walton will have the joy of 50 years of marriage.

The Mayfield Church expressed the joy of a successful capital campaign. Jon Faraone also said that New Orleans police towed the bus away that their Presbyterian Disaster Assistance team was using.

Jim Stahr expressed concern about his father-in-law, Leon Graham, who lives in Central City and has skin cancer.

Lon Lorton said a grandson having medical problems has gone through many tests. Doctors have ruled out all long term problems.

Lon also said that 239 persons have been ministered to by a prison ministry from Madisonville.

Martha Haynes expressed the need for prayers for Thelma Baker who has a broken hip. She also expressed the joy of Laura Mullins being able to rejoin us today. Laura expressed the joy to be back.

Jonathan Carroll expressed thanks for celebrating new life of Zoe.

Eleanor Pryor expressed the joy of having Rev. Tim Davis serving the First Presbyterian Church in Greenville.

Martha Jo Ross expressed concern for a friend who fell and injured his back last fall and has had no relief. Josh Jacobs has a portion of his vertebrate out of line.

Laura Morris expressed concern for a son who was injured at work and has nerve damage in his back.

Tim Davis expressed joy for this unusual Presbytery and its warm family feeling. He requested prayer for Greenville Church to discern its future.

## **Presbyterian Planning Calendar**

The Presbytery Office has several 2006-2007 Planning Calendars you can purchase at a reduced amount of \$8.25 each. You can pick one up at the Presbytery Office or we can mail one with an additional postage charge.

## **Bread for the World**

The Church and Society Committee request that the Presbytery of Western Kentucky conduct an Offering of Letters at the next presbytery meeting. If this is approved it will be conducted under the umbrella of Bread for the World, an organization that this body has been a member of for a number of years. Bread is non-partisan, does not support political parties, seeks only to bring relief to those who hunger through legislation, and is supported by 26 other denominations.

At the last presbytery meeting the Church & Society committee report on Guatemala, commented “that usually when we are attempting to raise the awareness of people in pain we paint the picture in numbers”.....the number of hurt, dying, homeless etc. When we discuss world hunger, the numbers become almost abstract .....852 million people in the world go hungry and in developing countries, 6 million die each year, mostly from hunger-related causes. Here in the United States, 14 million children live in households where people have to skip meals or eat less to make ends meet. In this example, numbers become overwhelming to the point that we become immobilized. It also desensitizes us to the individual, the child living in the housing project in the Northwest section of Bowling Green and the sad part of this report of numbers is that it doesn’t come close to expressing the magnitude of the numbers that generated the root-causes of hunger.....Diseases (HIV), education, civil wars, and natural disasters, etc.

Letter writing.... It is not only the size of the problem that immobilizes us. We are wary of the effectiveness of letters to our congressman (person?). Sometimes we forget that our government is the most powerful force on the planet, that we are capable of doing the most good and well as the most harm.....but what we forget more often; that as faithful people we have the support of the most powerful and most loving force in the universe...our God, creator of all. It is pointless to beg from our civil servants without first going to our knees and asking God not only for support but for guidance for what we ask for. Some of us will be concerned about the separation of Church and State. That’s an individual call, but for most, there is no marriage.....simply a call to love our neighbor.

Letter writing is never easy when it is aimed at the federal budget. This year, unless you have been living under a stone, we know the federal debt of our day is beyond our grasp.

As people of faith we must speak out with and for the most vulnerable as their voices are least often heard in the corridors of Washington. We recognize that government must provide security and

protection, but experience shows us that it is often injustice that make us most vulnerable. We see clearly that again this year there is economic injustice and indifference to those most in need. The present budget proposal continues the trend of last year in cutting programs for those most vulnerable but contains even greater cuts in the years to come. When we write our legislators what shall we say?

1. Be personal. Handwritten letters still get more attention.
2. Be concise and request specific action.
3. If you write letters between now and next Presbytery Meeting, please either send or bring them back. We can mail collectively for a show of force in numbers.
4. Make a specific legislative request of your members of Congress.
5. Write your name and address on both the letter and the envelope. Members of Congress pay primary attention into your own words.
6. If all else fails, not sufficient information or time, at our next gathering you will be given sample letter to sign. This will be a litmus test on our seriousness.
7. The Church and Society Committee will be responsible for envelopes, stamps, mailing etc. There are a number of Kentucky legislators who impact the budget scene:

Sen. Jim Bunning (R) serves on the Senate Budget Commission; Sen. Mitch McConnell(R) chairs the State, Foreign Operations; Rep. Anne Northup (R) serves on the House Appropriations Committee; Rep. Ben Chandler (D) serves on the House International Relations Committee.

Unless you request differently, all letters will be directed toward Sen. Mitch McConnell. His position, seniority, and effectiveness make this a good choice.

If you have any questions, please call John Gramling at 270-622-4889 or email him at [jgramling7@nctc.com](mailto:jgramling7@nctc.com)

## Upcoming Events

**Mission Coordinating Council Meeting** – Tuesday, July 11, 2006 at 1:30 p.m. at the Presbytery Office.

**Next Presbytery Meeting** – Saturday, August 12, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. at the Highland Presbyterian Church

## Highlights May 2006

In the February *Highlights* I wrote that you shouldn't spend a lot of time reading what I wrote! I wanted readers to note that we had a Water Project. I'm still excited that this Presbytery is putting together a team of folks who will install a water purification system in Guatemala and helping folks understand why it was that Jesus Christ said HE was "Living Water." We had our first breakfast meeting and there will be 10 people who will go to install the system and train people on the value of clean water. Make sure that your pastor / session / congregation is aware of our effort. And, be prepared for future efforts!

At the recent Presbytery meeting I noted that we're all concerned about the personnel from the Louisville office who have lost their jobs. Each of us should pray that the effort that our denomination is putting into re-structuring will make us more effective in our witness for Christ. We each need to make sure we lift up in prayer those who are searching for a different / new call.

We had a wonderful (and efficient!) Presbytery meeting at Mt. Zion Presbyterian Church in May. If there is anyone who has never been to that historical, old place of worship it may be a good journey for you someday. They have two hundred years (and counting) of witness in Muhlenberg County. Our hosts (and hostesses) were just the best!

Finally, don't forget that the 217<sup>th</sup> General Assembly meets in mid June. Our Commissioners (Matthew Covington, Helen Jordan, and Jonathan Davis) will be in Birmingham from 15 June to 23 June. Please lift them in prayer for an effective General Assembly.

Blessings,

Rich Cooper