

March 2010

Midpoint
midpoint@presbynyc.org

AROUND THE TABLE

As I pen these brief words for Midpoint I am hoping that we are past the “midpoint of winter.” Even when one plans a week of vacation in a warm place a foot of snow derails such plans. I am reminded of the title of John Steinbeck’s last book, *The Winter of our Discontent*, as I look at our Presbytery and the challenges that face us. There is hope, however, for Presbytery has decided to enter into a mediation process using the services of the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center. This process will test our willingness to open ourselves to changing the way we do things.

We are a presbytery with challenges and opportunities. We are a presbytery with tremendous resources to meet the challenges. Some of these will not be overcome easily. Many of our congregations consist of members who are 60 and older, while a lesser number have young families with children. An opportunity exists for congregations with few if any children to learn what is effective in those with children to spare. Some of our congregations have lay leadership to spare while others long for just a few of these persons to assist them in their ministries. One nagging question is “Where is the Macedonian call and response?”

Maybe our presbytery needs to use the analogy of a round table where needs are identified and assistance is offered. Around this table we could learn of the congregation that has a non-profit board which requires some leadership skills that the particular congregation does not have. On the other hand, around the same table are churches with volunteers eager to become engaged where needs for their skills exist. We have not recently tried in this Presbytery this proven pattern of shared ministry and mission. Through such an endeavor we just might discover we need each other, and that we can trust each other. We might realize that together we can more effectively do the will of God than we can alone.

INSIDE: A HAITI REPORT

RESOURCES + WAYS TO HELP

- MONEY
- MAKE HYGIENE & BABY KITS

-WHAT NOT TO DO

READ ABOUT PDA's RESPONSE
TO THE
EARTHQUAKE IN CHILE
AT
WWW.PCUSA.ORG/PDA

J. OSCAR McCLOUD
Acting Executive Presbyter

WELCOME!

In the eight months I have served as Moderator, I have moderated three stated meetings as well as two specially called meetings. I have also moderated five other gatherings of the Presbytery: an ordination, two installations, and the commissioning of two lay pastors. Moderating meetings, for the most part, is a satisfying experience. Yes, you read correctly: "satisfying." At the end of a meeting, I feel grateful that all items on the docket were addressed ... at times to the dissatisfaction of some, at other times to the satisfaction of most. It's at the *other* gatherings, though, that I have experienced the joy of being the Moderator of the Presbytery of the City of New York. Yes: "joy!"

I'm sure you have experienced, at one time or another, the awesomeness of the Spirit working through you. It's awe-inspiring as well as humbling. I've been blessed to feel it when I sing: there are times the Spirit has so moved me that I choke up and am nearly unable to finish the song. I've also (and more consistently) felt that awesome feeling during ordinations and installations -- standing with fellow elders and deacons in the chancels of our churches, laying hands on ordinands, connecting with other elders or deacons -- the sensation in my hands as I feel the Spirit impart its power and

THE MODERATOR MUSES

blessing, using me as an instrument. These are deeply moving and joyful moments and, for me, are an acting out of Jesus' invitation to follow him. No human (to my knowledge, at least) has been given magical or supernatural powers; on the contrary! I am deeply moved when I realize God uses the

ordinary stuff of which we are all made, invites us, and welcomes us to use whatever gifts we have to build the kingdom. Some of us are architects, some are masons, some are sculptors, and even others are bricklayers. Without each other, we cannot build. It takes the community of faith to build up the kingdom.

And there's the other aspect of ordinations, installations, and commissioning services that is so important: the community of faith.

Strictly speaking, ordinations are as official -- and require attendance and participation of presbyters - - as any stated or specially called meeting. The Book of Order states: "Ordination [is] an Act of the Whole Church ... carried out by the presbytery, setting apart a person to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament." (G14.0480) It doesn't get much clearer than that. But there's more: our actions and participation signify encouragement, commitment, and welcome. And while this reference is to ordination, it applies also to installations and commissioning services. We're called as the whole church to witness, participate, and welcome these new members to our community of faith. But when the Presbytery isn't adequately present, the welcome is less warm ... the sense of community less real ... the feeling of encouragement less palpable. I realize these services often occur on days we like to rest but my hope is that we will be as encouraging and supportive to others as we would want to be encouraged and supported.

It would give me as much joy to see you at upcoming ordinations, installations and commissioning services as I feel when I moderate our called meetings ... and maybe even more!

Blessings,

Yvonne

F Y I

NEXT MEETING OF PRESBYTERY
March 27, 2010 at 9 AM
FIRST CHINESE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
 61 Henry Street
 Manhattan 212-964-5488

MEETINGS OF PRESBYTERY

May 18 Eastchester, Bronx
 September 25
 November 16

MEETINGS OF GENERAL COUNCIL

Tuesday, April 20, 2010
 Tuesday, May 4, 2010
 Tuesday June 15, 2010

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

COM MEETINGS

April 13, 2010
 June 8, 2010
 July 13, 2010
 September 7, 2010
 October 12, 2010
 November 2, 2010
 December 7, 2010

COM MATERIALS DEADLINE

March 30, 2010
 May 25, 2010
 June 29, 2010
 August 24, 2010
 September 28, 2010
 October 19, 2010
 November 23, 2010

- A session's primary point of contact is its COM-appointed liaison.
- Please allow 1 - 2 weeks to receive action letters following the meeting of COM.
- COM doesn't normally acknowledge receipt of correspondence until COM can act on it.
- Official correspondence should be mailed to the Presbytery office or, preferably, e-mailed to com@presbynyc.org.

MEMBERS of CPM's LEADERSHIP

Chair	Rev. Carmen Rosario	crosario_reyes@msn.com	212-923-3215
Pulpit -Ord'd & Installed	Rev. Grace Bowen	reverendbowen@yahoo.com	617-308-0634
Pulpit - Temp. Positions	Rev. Anne Conroy (Vice Chair)	conroyannel@gmail.com	914-329-1558
Pastoral Care	Rev. Marcel Welty	marcel@nccusa.org	212-870-2379
Pensions/Comp.	Rev. Noreen Santos	pastornoreen@yahoo.com	718-647-8110
Staff	Rev. J. Oscar McCloud	omccloud@presbynyc.org	212-870-2221
Staff	Yzette Swavy-Lipton	yswavylipton@presbynyc.org	212-870-2221

CHECK IT OUT!

A new website for the Presbytery of New York City went “live” on Thursday, January 21. The address has not changed -- we're still at www.nycpresbytery.org -- but the layout is new, and we're working to add new content as we are able. Committees and councils are encouraged to review their content, as much of it was simply transferred from the old site and may be in need of updates. The site is hosted on a free hosting service for non-profits, runs on open-source free software, and was



designed and built with volunteers from within the presbytery. We're particularly excited about making it easier to update the site and add new features -- or even redesign it! -- in the future as funding becomes available.

Many thanks to the Website Working Group for their work on framing and designing the new site: the Rev. ANDY JAMES, convener; the Rev. CLARK BRADLEY; Elder EMMANUEL GOUED-NJAYICK; Elder ADOLFO GRIFFITH; the Rev. CHRISTOPHER SMITH; YZETTE SWAVY-LIPTON and JAMES TSE, Presbytery staff.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT DAY

"Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders." NUMBERS 13:1-3

The Presbytery of New York City and the COUNCIL OF CONGREGATIONAL MINISTRY AND NURTURE thanks BRICK CHURCH, the Rev. Dr. MICHAEL LINDVALL, and staff for hosting the *Leadership Development Day*, Saturday, February 13, 2010.

It was not by chance or accident that so many came to this year's Leadership Development. There were newcomers, having been newly elected; those who come year after year, seeking new ideas to bring back to their congregations and ministries; and those who were there for personal edification and spiritual growth.

As we enter into the second decade of this new millennium, God wants to *raise up* a standard of leaders in the Presbytery of New York City who have been called to lead the rebuilding. Moderator YVONNE ARMSTRONG sang a spirit-moving rendition of *Precious Lord*, symbolizing the call for divine leadership in the move to rebuild.

Every person who attended is a leader called to build, called to raise, called to water and to nurture, in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Many thanks to the participants, facilitator's, volunteer workers, the youth, and the staff of the Presbytery of New York City.

JANET PEARSON
Youth Coordinator

SPECIAL REPORT



H A I T I

A special report by
ANNIE RAWLINGS
Associate Executive Presbyter

PDA RAISES \$3.8 MILLION + FOR HAITIAN RELIEF

Many churches in the Presbytery of New York City are part of the PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE response: sending money, making hygiene and baby kits, planning fundraisers, helping Haitians in the community, etc.

PDA has already committed over \$500,000 to Haiti for projects undertaken by on-the-ground partners, which include:

- International partners Church World Service (www.churchworldservice.org), Action by Churches Together (www.act-intl.org), and
- Haitian Institutions such as the Episcopal Church of Haiti (www.egliseepiscopaledhaiti.org), Service Chretien d'Haiti, the Lambi Fund (www.lambifund.org) – a highly respected micro-credit organization; and the Farmers' Movement of Papay (www.mpphaiti.org) - the oldest and largest farmers' organization in Haiti.

Funds allocated to date have helped provide:

- **Basic humanitarian relief:** temporary shelter, food and health assistance; along with water and sanitation engineers, equipment to construct water purification systems and latrines;
- **Over 20,000 tents;**

HAITI – SPECIAL REPORT

- **Over 35,000 hygiene kits.** More are needed; see instructions below;
- **Mission personnel** trained to serve/work with people with disabilities and their families;
- **\$200,000 to Holy Cross Hospital** (Hôpital Sainte Croix) **and its associated nursing school** – both in Leogane, near the earthquake’s epicenter. Hôpital Sainte Croix is a historical Presbyterian-supported hospital in partnership with the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti. It is the primary medical facility in its area.

The hospital and related facilities are also supported by PCUSA INTERNATIONAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT (www.pcusa.org/health/international/haiti.htm) and the MEDICAL BENEVOLENCE FOUNDATION, a validated ministry of the PCUSA (www.mbfoundation.org), whose staff brought 4,000 pounds of medical supplies and equipment to Leogane on January 19.

The PCUSA WASHINGTON OFFICE asked Presbyterians to contact PRESIDENT OBAMA to ask for massive assistance to Haiti for relief and reconstruction in the form of grants, not loans; and cancellation of the rest of Haiti’s debt. <http://capwiz.com/pcusa/callalert/index.tt?alertid=14560626&type=PR>

TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS FOR HAITIANS

The PCCUSA OFFICE OF IMMIGRATION ISSUES and the WASHINGTON OFFICE advocated for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitians, allowing them to remain in the United States for at least 18 months as part of a comprehensive response to the current humanitarian crisis.

Haitians wishing to apply for TPS are advised to seek legal counsel as there are important eligibility requirements and filing deadlines that must be met. New York City TPS Registration sites can be found online (New York Immigration Coalition list) at:

www.thenyic.org/templates/documentFinder.asp?did=1150

FOOD AND HUNGER

The PRESBYTERIAN HUNGER PROGRAM (PHP) is also responding to the disaster in Haiti by sending money for the purchase of critically needed seeds for beans and corn. Food grown from the seeds is expected to be ready in July. In addition, Mission Co-Worker Mark Hare is working on sustainable agriculture with the Farmer’s Movement of Papay. You can read his blog here: markandjenny--pcusa.blogspot.com.

Assessment for Ongoing Commitment:
PDA and PHP have sent personnel – experts in disaster relief and recovery, and in food security – to Haiti as part of an assessment team. The PCUSA plans to remain involved in Haiti for many years to come. All monies donated to Haiti that are earmarked for Haiti will help support this effort.

LIVING WATERS OF THE WORLD, a ministry of the SYNOD OF LIVING WATERS, sent two staff to do an assessment in Haiti and – as six of 19 clean water systems were destroyed by the earthquake -- they are raising money to rebuild and expand water systems in Haiti.

Learn more at: <http://app.e2ma.net/campaign/35800.e6d812f290355994f51eef98d0898e87>

It’s a hallmark of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance that it remains involved – long after other organizations have packed up and gone home. For example, PDA’s response to Hurricane Katrina remains ongoing – read about it here: www.pcusa.org/pda/response/usa/katrinafouryears.htm.
Read about other PDA engagements, both national and international, at www.pcusa.org/pda.

Embody God’s Love • Proclaim God’s Word • Promote God’s Peace

**IN ADDITION TO MAKING AND SENDING
HYGIENE KITS AND BABY KITS (see next page)
GIVING MONEY IS STILL THE BEST WAY TO HELP!**

Send donations to PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE via

secure PCUSA website: www.pcusa.org/give/online/projectSelectAction.do?numberString=DR000064

or

by check: (please include special designated giving account DR000064 – Haiti)

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
P.O. Box 643700
Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700

Send donations to PRESBYTERIAN HUNGER PROGRAM

via secure PCUSA website: www.pcusa.org/give/online/projectSelectAction.do?numberString=H000014.

or

by check: with the special designated giving account H000014

NOT RECOMMENDED

COLLECTING CLOTHING

Money used for transport can be better spent on the ground in Haiti. Clothing donations often present an unwanted burden, using up scarce resources of personnel, storage space, and money; and in Haiti, there is the added difficulty of delivery.

MISSION TRIPS TO HAITI

Perhaps not for many months. Providing food and shelter for volunteers puts an even greater strain on the already-strained infrastructure. **VOLUNTEERS WITH SPECIALIZED EXPERTISE** may sign up, and find links to non-Presbyterian volunteer networks online at: <http://www.pcusa.org/pda/register/haiti.jsp>

HYGIENE KITS

(need is ongoing – in Haiti, and to prepare for other disasters)

In a one-gallon bag with zipper closure, seal together these items:

- 1 — hand towel (approximately 16" x 28", no fingertip or bath towels)
- 1 — washcloth
- 1 — wide-tooth comb
- 1 — nail clipper (no metal files or emery boards)
- 1 — bar of soap (bath size in wrapper)
- 1 — toothbrush (in original packaging)
- 6 — Band-Aids® or other adhesive bandage strips

Please do not add toothpaste to the Hygiene Kit. Toothpaste with extended expiration dates will be added to Hygiene Kits just prior to shipment.

Please do not add any items other than those specified, and do not add more than the quantity specified (doing so will result in staff or volunteers spending time to remove excess items).

Shipping:

- Complete kits should be packed in boxes with only one type of kit in each box – unless you are shipping a small number of each kit and they can be combined in one box.
- Clearly mark the outside of the box with the contents.
- Include the name and address of the church, group, or individual sending the kits at the top before sealing the box.
- Secure the boxes with packing tape and send to:

BABY KITS

(need is ongoing – in Haiti, and to prepare for other disasters)

Diapers Note: While cloth diapers are not as commonly used in the United States, they are a necessary part of the layette. 12-packs of cloth diapers can be purchased at Target and many Sears stores or may be purchased online at one of the following sites:

cottonbabies.org clothdiaper.com
babybestbuy.com thanksmama.com

- 2 — T-shirts or undershirts (no onesies)
- 2 — washcloths
- 2 — gowns or sleepers
- 2 — diaper pins
- 1 — sweater or sweatshirt
- 2 — receiving blankets (one can be a hand-knitted or crocheted baby blanket)

All items should be new and under 12 months in size. Wrap items inside one of the receiving blankets and secure with both diaper pins. Patterns are available for many of the components at:

www.churchworldservice.org/site/PageServer?pagename=kits_babycare .



CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

(410) 635-8794

Brethren Service Center Annex
601 Main Street
New Windsor, MD 21776-0188

PCUSA's HAITI LINKS

- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance: www.pcusa.org/pda
- PCUSA Haiti Mission Network: <http://pcusahaitinetwork.ning.com>
- Presbyterian Hunger Program: main web site: www.pcusa.org/hunger
on Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Louisville-KY/Presbyterian-Hunger-Program/11586835518
- Presbyterian International Health and Development:
www.pcusa.org/health/international/index.htm
- Presbyterian Mission Connections: www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/profiles/haiti.htm
- Presbyterian Mission Crossroads: <http://missioncrossroads.ning.com>
- Presbyterian Worldwide Mission: www.pcusa.org/worldwide/haiti/security.htm
- Presbyterian News Service (read stories, subscribe):
www.pcusa.org/pcnews/
- Presbyterian Washington Office: www.pcusa.org/washington
- Living Waters of the World: www.livingwatersfortheworld.org
- Medical Benevolence Foundation: www.mbfoundation.org
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LOCAL NYC HAITI RELIEF PROGRAMS

NEW YORK HAITI EARTHQUAKE FAMILY CENTER

NYS State Armory: 1579 Bedford Avenue, between Union and President Streets in Brooklyn *Hours:* Mon-Fri; 10AM-8PM • Sat 11AM-4PM • Closed Sunday

Services:

- Creole-speaking interpretation services;
- Assistance with completing Temporary Protected Status applications and other immigration-related assistance;
- Access to telephones to contact appropriate federal and Haitian officials;
- Use of computers for consulting a broad range of websites, including New York State's Registry of New York Citizens in Haiti;
- Child guardianship and custody services;
- Legal information; and
- Grief counseling.

HAITI FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

Haitian First Church of the Brethren: 1783 Flatbush Avenue (Between Avenues J & K) in Brooklyn *Hours:* Mon-Fri; 10AM-8PM • Sat 10AM-4PM • Closed Sunday *Contact Info:* Phone: 917-284-7938 • Email: haitiFCS@gmail.com

Services:

- Emotional and Spiritual Care for families with deceased or missing relatives in Haiti.
- Internet-equipped computers for families to register missing relatives online.
- Referrals for TPS Clinics
- Legal Aid Referrals
- Adoption Referrals to get related orphaned children in Haiti to the U.S.
- Hot Meals

IMMIGRATION REFORM

MARCH 21, WASHINGTON, D.C. AT THE NATIONAL MALL

Tens of thousands will gather on the West Lawn of the CAPITOL AT 2 PM to send a powerful message to PRESIDENT OBAMA and to CONGRESS: The time to fix our broken immigration system is now. People of faith will be part of this group of thousands upon thousands.

MARCH FOR AMERICA
CHANGE TAKES COURAGE AND FAITH

The march coincides with ECUMENICAL ADVOCACY DAYS, the annual conference taking place in Washington, D.C. March 19 – 22. The title of the program this year is *A Place to Call Home: Immigrants, Refugees, and Displaced Peoples*. For more information see: www.advocacydays.org

➡ TO JOIN THE BUS CARAVAN of the new York State Interfaith Network for Immigration Reform traveling to Washington, D.C. and back on March 21 for the rally, contact LILLY SANTIAGO at www.presbynyc.org Cost \$15

A LOCAL IMMIGRANT STORY

The following testimony was offered by a 13 year-old teenager at the Inter-Religious Convocation for Just and Humane Immigration Reform, held February 18th.

Hello. My name is Diana and I am 13 years old. I'm an active member of St. Leo's church in Corona. St. Leo's is a member of Queens Congregations United for Action. I am a US citizen, born here in Corona, but my parents are not. I am here to tell my story. About 2 years ago, there was a tragedy in my family. Both of my grandparents died in the same week, the mother of my father, and the father of my mother. This was a time of great sadness that my family went through, but the worst part is this: because of the fact that they were undocumented immigrants, my parents could not go to Mexico to bury their loved ones. The death of my grandparents was insanely sad, but there lies the real tragedy. My parents could not go to Mexico to bury their loved ones because of lacking legal status. They have been here in this country for about 20 years, have 3 kids, are hard-working, and are loving parents. The fact that my father could not say his final goodbyes to his mother, my *abuelita*, plunged him into a depression that affected the entire family. We were never the same again. Then, there is always the constant fear we live in that one day we will be separated. If my parents are one day deported back to Mexico, what will become of my brothers and me? As much as I love my parents' native country, I would never have the same opportunities as I do here. So many of my friends are in the same situation. I am here to voice my opinion that there should be an immigration reform, because I would never want any family, any other child to go through the pain that I went through. I don't want another child, citizen of this country, to ever fear that one day they could be torn apart from their parents. Thank you.

PEACEMAKING

TRUTH COMMISSION ON CONSCIENCE IN WAR to honor and protect freedom of conscience for our nation's service members; part of nationwide conversations about CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION and JUST WAR: March 23-October 1, 2010; Commission Report released: November 11, 2010

PUBLIC HEARING:
MARCH 21, 2010
4 – 8 PM

THE RIVERSIDE CHURCH
490 Riverside Dr.
New York

The PCUSA and the COUNCIL FOR WITNESS IN SOCIETY AND THE WORLD of the Presbytery of New York City join a long list of co-sponsors of this event. For more information: www.conscienceinwar.org

Honorary Host:

- Chaplain (Colonel) Herman Keizer, Jr., U. S. Army Chaplain, retired; Director of Chaplaincy Ministries for the Christian Reformed Church in North America; Former Chair, National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces America

Commission Chair:

- Rev. Dr. Kaia Stern, Director of the Pathways Home Project at the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice at Harvard Law School

Testifiers and Expert Witnesses:

- Dr. Camillo "Mac" Bica, Professor of Philosophy, School of Visual Arts (NYC), former Marine Corps Officer and Vietnam Veteran
- Joshua Casteel, veteran and Conscientious Objector, former US Army Interrogator at Abu Ghraib; featured in the documentary, *Soldiers of Conscience*
- Rabbi Douglas E. Krantz, Congregation B'nai Yisrael; Member, Executive Board, Jewish Peace Fellowship
- Jake Diliberto: OEF and OIF US Marine Veteran, Founder of Veterans for Rethinking Afghanistan, Fuller Theological Seminary
- Chris Hedges, former war correspondent for the New York Times and author of *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*
- Logan Laituri, Army veteran with service in Iraq during OIF II, and co-founder of Centurion's Guild
- Rev. Dr. Pamela Lightsey, Associate Vice President, Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary, veteran, expert in just war theories in Christianity
- J. E. McNeil, Executive Director, Center on Conscience & War, legal expert
- Camilo Mejia, veteran and conscientious objector, author of *Road from Ar Ramadi*, featured in the documentary, *Soldiers of Conscience*
- Celeste Zappala, Member of Gold Star Families Speak Out; Mother of Sgt Sherwood Baker, Pennsylvania National Guardsman, killed in Baghdad, April 26, 2004, while searching for weapons of mass destruction.

Additional Testifiers and Expert Witnesses

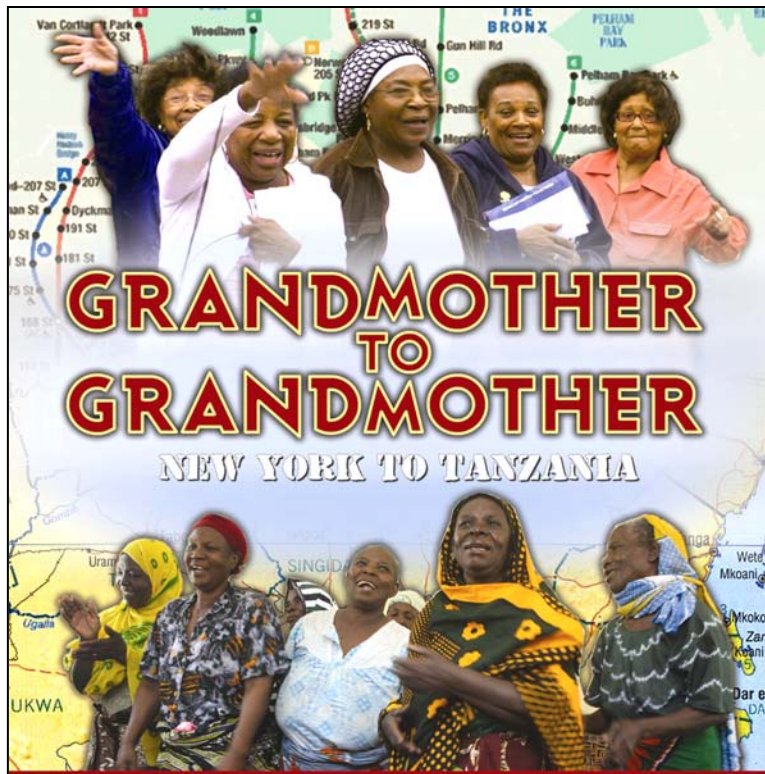
- Additional Veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars

HIGHLIGHTS FROM PRESBYTERIAN SENIOR SERVICES

PSS HITS THE RED CARPET

The recently completed *GRANDMOTHER TO GRANDMOTHER* documentary had its NYC premiere on January 13, 2010. Over 110 guests packed the CUNY Graduate Center to view the official city screening of the award-winning film. The film tells the story of our **BRONX GRANDMOTHERS** struggling to

care for their grandchildren – as well the story of their counterparts in Tanzania. In addition to seeing this moving film on the big screen, attendees enjoyed a pre- and post-viewing wine and cheese reception, allowing them to network with the filmmakers and “stars” of the documentary.



Pictured above is WSFSSH Executive Director the Rev. LAURA JERVIS introducing the two filmmakers. The event was the ideal showcase for this vital and unique resource. **THE PSS/WSF GRANDPARENT FAMILY APARTMENTS**, the first of its kind in the US, provides housing and support services to 50 grandparents raising their grandchildren. PSS staff not only assist the elderly caregivers but also provide educational, vocational and support programs for the ninety or so youth living in this unique facility.

PSS is making this film available to Presbyterian churches for public viewing at no charge. If your church organization or club would like

to inquire about the possibility of scheduling a special group presentation of the documentary to include representatives from the PSS/WSF GrandParent Family Apartments, please contact JACQUELINE DELGADO at 718-585-1640 ext 111 or via email at jdelgado@pssusa.org .

TWO 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS IN ONE

On December 7, 2010, two special 25th anniversaries were celebrated at the **PSS ALBERTA L. ALSTON HOUSE**. Almost two hundred gathered not only to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the 150-unit apartment building, but also to thank and recognize outgoing Board President **ROGER McATEER** for his leadership and dedication. Roger, who from the beginning played a key role in establishing the senior apartment, was honored as he stepped down as the Board President for the past twenty five years. Pictured below, left to right, is Roger McAteer, his wife **COLLEEN McATEER**, the Rev. Dr. **EDWARD DAVIS** from **ST. ALBANS**, and new Alberta Alston House President **JAMES TSE**.



The 150 unit apartment is named after **ALBERTA LOIS ALSTON**, who was a devout Christian, mentor, and community leader in New Jersey and St. Albans (Queens), as well as a ruling elder of St. Albans. In 1977 Ms. Alston was the first African American female moderator of the Presbytery of New York City. As a result of the Rev. **JAMES GRANT**'s aspirations for senior housing, the Alberta L. Alston House was completed in the fall of 1984. The building is sponsored by **PRESBYTERIAN SENIOR SERVICES**, with financing by the Housing & Urban Development

KEEPING OLDER ADULTS IN TOUCH, ONLINE AND *ENGAGED*

PSS has been a leader in assuring that those attending any of its six senior centers have access to resources that can assist and engage them and keep them connected. This includes computer labs and classes – both of which were recently expanded at two PSS senior centers. The **PSS ANDREW JACKSON CENTER** added 2 computer classes, in English and Spanish, to its popular program offerings. The **PSS DAVIDSON CENTER** upgraded its computer lab with new state-of-the-art computers from Per Scholas. The expansion of computer classes and equipment was made possible by funding support from **SENATOR RUBEN DIAZ**.



DR. ROBERT L. WASHINGTON TO BE HONORED AT MAGGIE KUHN AWARDS ON APRIL 14

PSS is pleased to announce that on Wednesday, April 14, 2010, the 15th annual **MAGGIE KUHN AWARDS** will be honoring Dr. **ROBERT L. WASHINGTON**, for his many years of dedicated work as a community leader and passionate advocate for the elderly, and EmblemHealth, for its impact as the founding member of the New York City Family Caregiving Coalition. The awards, among the most prestigious awards in the field of aging, are presented to those who have made a significant difference in the lives of others, particularly the older adult, and for their selfless advocacy for the dignity and rights of all people. This year awards will be presented during a special cocktail reception at New York City's Princeton Club from 6 to 8 PM.

Contact **JACQUELYN DELGADO** at 718-585-1640 or by email at jdelgado@pssusa.org for your invitation and for details as to how you can support this special recognition.

SCHOLARSHIP REMINDER

The **SYNOD OF THE NORTHEAST** is receiving **WURFFEL / SILLS SCHOLARSHIPS AND INTEREST-FREE STUDENT LOAN PROGRAM** applications for 2010.

Please note that Synod now offers the scholarship/loan applications on line. Please direct inquiries to www.synodne.org for a downloadable version.

The application and essay are due in the Synod on **APRIL 1ST** and supporting documents to the application are due on **APRIL 15TH**.

The program is for individuals who are or will be pursuing higher education goals and will be attending seminary, undergraduate, graduate or educational programs at accredited institutions on a full-time basis.

All applications will be reviewed by the Individual Grants Task Force. Three applications are chosen for scholarships. Those not chosen for the scholarship program will be reviewed for eligibility to receive an interest-free loan.

Synod's *Interest-Free* Student Loan Program applications for 2010

Call **HELEN MANSFIELD** at Synod if there are any questions. 800-585-5881 or 315-446-5990
[315-446-3708 Fax]

SEEKING A PLACE TO WORSHIP

An immigrant fellowship in the Presbytery of New York City is seeking a place to worship on Sundays. The fellowship has some funds available to pay for such space.

Please contact the Rev. **RUTH BOLING**, Chair of the **COMMITTEE ON DEVELOPING CONGREGATIONS** for more information, ruthboling@aol.com



**PICTURES FROM LACONIA'S
BLACK HISTORY CELEBRATION
ON FEBRUARY 28, 2010**

Top: left to right, the Rev. JAMES REESE, former NYC EP who preached, Elder LILLI SISCO (EASTCHESTER) and DORRETTE WINSLOW (LACONIA)

Middle and bottom: Some of LACONIA'S YOUTH who gave presentations.

Photos by Yzette Swavy-Lipton

PRESBYTERS IN PAIRS ...

photos by Yzette Swavy Lipton



... AT THE JANUARY 26, 2010 MEETING OF PRESBYTERY AT UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

top: the Rev. NOREEN SANTOS and the Rev. MARGARET THOMAS

top: the Rev. PATRICK O'CONNOR and the Rev. GEORGE TODD

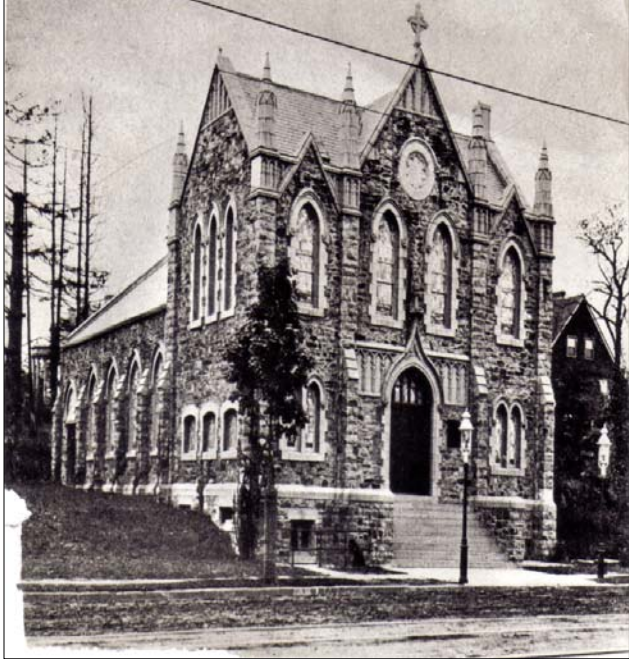
middle: KELLIE ANDERSON-PICALLO, who was approved for ordination to validated ministry at Auburn Media, and Elder JOYCE SEEBROOKS

middle: Moderator YVONNE ARMSTRONG and Stated Clerk the Rev. CORNELL EDMONDS

bottom: the Rev. RAY BAGNUOLO and Elder (and Candidate) ROSEMARIE NAPOLI

bottom: the Rev. ANNE CONROY and the Rev. KRYSTIN GRANBERG

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
2167 University Ave., Bronx, NY 10453
(718) 295-1220



Bless the LORD O my Soul, and forget not God's Benefits.
Psalms 103:2

You are invited to celebrate with us
our
110th ANNIVERSARY
on Sunday, April 11, 2010

with worship at 11 AM,
followed by a
reception and celebration at
Bronx Community College's
Colston Hall at 3 PM

We solicit your prayers and donations

The Rev. Brenda Berry
and the officers of UHPC

Music, Entertainment and Catered Dinner
Single Adult - \$ 60; Double - \$ 110; Youth - \$ 40
Please RSVP by March 15

On February 18, 2010, the **HOUSE OF HOPE** Presbyterian Church in Bellerose, Queens, celebrated its 70th Anniversary at an evening worship service. Pastor **DAVID SCHULT** (pictured at right) delivered a moving sermon highlighting the church's journey and mission. The celebrating continued on February 27th when past and present church members, friends and dignitaries gathered for a luncheon at Koenig's Restaurant. Moderator **YVONNE ARMSTRONG**, representing the Presbytery, challenged the congregation to continue to be a beacon of hope for another 70 years. State Senator **FRANK PADAVAN** was on hand to present the church with a proclamation in appreciation of House of Hope's well-known ecumenical and community involvement.



CHURCH TRIUMPHANT

Excerpted from a release from Rutgers: Elder **VERA MOWRY ROBERTS** passed away late Sunday night/early Monday morning, February 1, 2010. There was a memorial service at **RUTGERS** on Sunday, February 14 at 5 PM.

Vera was a noted theater historian and author. She founded the theatre department at Hunter College, co-founded the Theatre Ph.D. program at the CUNY Graduate Center and was the founding editor of the Journal of American Drama and Theatre.

Vera became a member of Rutgers on February 5, 1961 and became an elder in 1963. She served on many committees of the presbytery and chaired quite a few of them. She was elected the first woman moderator of the Presbytery of New York City in 1975 and also served as Acting Executive Presbyter prior to the call of George Todd. She served twice as a commissioner to the General Assembly.

In a message to Presbytery, Acting Executive Presbyter, the Rev. Dr. **J. OSCAR MCCLLOUD**, wrote "Elder Vera Roberts was a beloved elder stateswoman. Vera was a mainstay in Rutgers for many years and a stalwart member of Presbytery who was active well into her 80s. As we celebrate the life and witness of Vera Roberts we also can give thanks to God for the gifts she gave to the Presbytery."

"I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the house of the Lord, in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!"



The Reverend **RICHARD PRESTON**, minister member of Presbytery, died in his sleep on Saturday morning, December 19, 2009. Richard, who was retired and lived in Manhattan with his wife, Mary, served in several positions with Presbytery, including interim Stated Clerk, and temporary pastoral positions at **FOURTH BROOKLYN**, **SECOND MANHATTAN** and others.

Richard was ill during his last six weeks, and had been to visit his doctor the week before. There will be a memorial service for Richard sometime in the New Year. Presbytery will be informed when information about this service is available.

Messages may be sent to Richard's spouse, **MARY MATTIS**, at 75 West End Avenue #C221, New York 10023-7866.

"God is our hope and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved, and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea;There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God; the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High....The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

Selected verses from Psalm 46

OBITUARY

THE REVEREND ARABELLA THOMAS MEADOWS-ROGERS

July 15, 1949 - December 17, 2009

The Rev. Arabella Meadows-Rogers, a pioneering clergywoman in the Presbyterian Church, USA, died at 60 on December 17th, after a two-year battle with pancreatic cancer. She most recently served as Executive Presbyter of the Presbytery of New York City from the summer of 2003 until July of 2009, overseeing the mission and ministry of ninety-eight congregations. Ordained in 1975, Ms. Meadows-Rogers served churches in New York City, West Delhi, New York, Durham, North Carolina, and Grandin and Hunter, North Dakota, as well as serving as Executive Presbyter of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains from 1997 until 2003. In the Presbyteries of New York City and Northern Plains, Ms. Meadows-Rogers was the first woman to serve as Executive Presbyter.



Born in Frankfurt, Germany, on July 15, 1949, the daughter of a U.S. State Department diplomat, the Rev. Meadows-Rogers grew up in Hungary, Argentina, Ecuador, and Pakistan, as well as Bethesda, Maryland. She was a graduate of Duke University (1971) and Union Theological Seminary in New York City (1974).

As Executive Presbyter in New York, the Rev. Meadows-Rogers' leadership led to the expansion of the Commissioned Lay Pastors program, the doubling of installed Latino and Latina pastors, and the firm designation of monies for mission work from the sale of church property. According to the Rev. Susan Andrews, former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, USA and General Presbyter in Hudson River Presbytery, Ms. Meadows-Rogers "was a leader among her peers, building effective networks, encouraging marginalized people to grow into leadership, and challenging the status quo with prophetic visions of who the church is called to be.. By celebrating the image of God in each diverse person, she empowered others to transform both the church and society."

Ms. Meadows-Rogers began her career of service in her senior year of college as Vice-President of the National Student YWCA. At the beginning of her thirty-five-year ministerial career, she worked with the Association of Theological Schools on issues of women and theological education. Subsequently, she undertook many leadership roles in Synods, Presbyteries, and the General Assembly of the PCUSA. She also believed deeply in ecumenical cooperation and took an active role in Councils of Churches and interdenominational organizations in every venue of her ministry. She served as Dean of the Presbyterian Young Pastors' Seminar, as a trainer for new executive leadership in the PCUSA, as a member of the Steering Committee of the Association of PCUSA Executive Presbyters, and as Vice-President of the Council of Churches of the City of New York (2008-2009).

She also served as a Lecturer at Duke University Divinity School (1986-1992), as founding President of the Genesis Home Family Shelter in Durham, North Carolina (1988-92), and on the Board of Directors of Jamestown College in Jamestown, North Dakota (1998-2003). In 2008, she received the Leadership Achievement Award of the Holmes Presbyterian Camp and Conference Center, and in 2009 she received the Extraordinary Executive Leadership Award of the Council of Churches of the City of New York. She has had essays, sermons, and articles published in *Horizon* magazine, *The Journal of Preachers*, *Theological Education*, *Pulpit Digest*, and *The Clergy Journal*.

During her extensive illness, Ms. Meadows-Rogers bore witness to the fullness of life even in the midst of a deadly disease. In her preaching she spoke honestly about the paradox of life and death: “Vulnerability and strength. It’s a lesson I’m learning daily. It’s a lesson I can’t help from learning, because living with a terminal disease makes me different, weaker sometimes, more vulnerable. It’s a lesson that says vulnerability and strength are just two sides of the same coin, and each gains integrity and power by embracing the other side.”

Many across the country were strengthened by Ms. Meadows-Rogers’ faith. According to the Rev. Jill Hudson, Associate Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church, USA: “None of us will ever forget Arabella’s courage and continued wit as she fought against this horrible disease. Her wildly colorful head scarves were an outward statement of her inward joy of life and her determination to live fully until the last minute.” The Rev. Jon Walton, Pastor of First Presbyterian Church of New York City, echoed this sentiment: “Arabella resolved to live, to live today, and live into tomorrow, knowing that no tomorrow could rob her of life or of the hand that has always been in her hand, which is God’s hand.”

Arabella is survived by her husband of thirty-seven years, Dr. Robert Meadows-Rogers, an adjunct faculty member in art history at Fordham University (Rose Hill); by her son, Matthew Meadows-Rogers of Fargo, North Dakota; by her daughter Sarah Emma Diaz and her son-in-law Roberto Diaz and her grandchildren, Estella and Juan Diego, also all of Fargo, North Dakota; by her father, Jordan Thomas Rogers of Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania; by her three sisters: Elinor Rogers of Madison, Wisconsin; Louisa Rogers of Eureka, California, and Guanajuato, Mexico; and Jane McIver of Hillsborough, North Carolina; and by several nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her mother, Dr. Sarah Flinn Rogers, and a brother, Jordan Thomas Rogers, Jr.

A Memorial Service of Witness to the Resurrection will be held on Saturday, January 9, 2010, at 1:00 p.m., at the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, Madison Avenue and East 73rd Street in Manhattan. The Rev. Dr. Fred Anderson will preside, with the Rev. Dr. Susan Andrews preaching; the Rev. Dr. Oscar McCloud, Acting Executive Presbyter of the Presbytery of New York City, and Father Raymond Rafferty, pastor of Corpus Christi Roman Catholic Church in Manhattan, will also participate. A memorial service will also be held on Saturday, January 23, 2010, at 2:00 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church of Durham, North Carolina, the Rev. Joseph Harvard presiding.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be sent in Arabella’s name to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, Kentucky 40202-1396.

by JIM NEDELKA
Presbyterian News Service

ARABELLA'S TESTIMONY

Last week I finished Barbara Kingsolver's new novel, and was eager to pass it on to Arabella – until I realized I couldn't pass anything to Arabella ever again. That same day I was going through recipes trying to find some new dessert – and there was Arabella's Charlotte Russe recipe - without, of course, any specific measurements. And so I reached for the phone in order to get some clarity – until I remembered that there was no Arabella to call. And when in that stack of recipes I found 4 – count them 4 - different recipes for Arabella's biscuits – I realized that, now, the only way to find out which recipe is right – is to make them all. But then amidst my tears, I smiled - celebrating that this woman named Arabella lived just like she cooked – not with method and measurement, but with imagination and ingenuity.

Like most of us gathered here today, I have spent the last three weeks both remembering and trying not to remember. Remembering the color and the candor, the bourbon and the bracelets, the chapstick and the chocolate, the laughter and the love, the wisdom and the wit, the tough and the tender. And trying not to remember the chaos of cancer, the incessant indignities born with such great dignity, and that last inevitable dance toward death – death too sudden, too severe, too soon. But, dear friends, remember we must – we must remember all of it – for all of it was real – and all of it is truth – and Arabella – more than anyone I have ever known - was a truth teller.

And so here we sit - those called to remember:

To remember

Arabella, the wife, the lover, the muse;
Arabella, the mother, the aunt, the grandmother;
Arabella, the solid sister and Rogers rock;
Arabella, the daughter of devotion and delight;
Arabella, the fierce friend and demanding mentor;
Arabella, the pastor who empowered us
 but never pampered us,
 led us but never lied to us;
Arabella, the painter and the poet,
 the crafter and the cook,
 the one who saw beauty
 and embodied beauty;
Arabella, the mystic of beach and mountain and boundary waters;
Arabella, the executive and the organizer,
 the ecumenist and the prophet,
 the teacher and the preacher,
 Presbyterian rooted and Presbyterian proud;
Arabella, the sinner,
 wrestling with fear and impatience
 and impetuous opinion;
Arabella, the saint,
 pressing on toward the goal
 for the prize of the heavenly call
 of God in Christ Jesus.

Yes, indeed, amazing, audacious, authentic Arabella.

But, friends, we are also called to remember the struggle - the battle, the chemo, the suffering, the pain – and the gorgeous grace with which Arabella waged this war. And to never forget that both how she lived and how she died is the legacy that Arabella leaves all of us.

But enough of sentimentality, enough of emotion and image and dewy-eyed doxology. I can hear her now: “Susan, stop it! This service is not about me. It’s not about death. It’s about God. It’s about life. It’s about incarnation and resurrection. So, for God’s sake, preach the Gospel – the wonderful gospel, the glorious gospel. The old, old story of Jesus and his love.” So, I will.

The day after Arabella died, Rob and my husband and I were having dinner – beginning to talk about this Service of Witness to the Resurrection. Rob told us which scripture Arabella had chosen. And so I got out my Bible and turned to Psalm 116 and read it out loud - and we were simply stunned! This victorious psalm about life, about rescue from the snares and pangs, the distress and anguish of death, this paean of praise proclaiming that God has dealt bountifully with his servant, his simple one – this witness that God has loosed my bonds and delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling. This amazing proclamation that precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones.

Friends, this psalm is Arabella’s testimony – a vibrant proclamation of the good news of the Gospel – a profound description of her own journey of faith for 60 years - and the journey she invites each of us to travel on our own. Why? So that we might discover what she discovered - the awesome, awful, abundant and amazing grace of God So that we might trust what she trusted - that salvation is sealed forever in the resurrection promise of baptism – this bold promise that those who die with Christ are raised with Christ – this radiant promise that the goodness of God so uniquely incarnated in the goodness of Arabella, will never die.

And so what is Arabella’s testimony – her public witness - found in the words of the psalmist and the Gospel? What is the testimony Arabella leaves us through her own 60 year walk with God?

The first words of the psalm say it all – I love the Lord – always, unconditionally, in moments of anguish and doubt and fear and agony - I love the Lord – in moments of passion and joy and laughter and daring – I love the Lord. And Arabella’s love of the Lord was palpable. She loved the Lord in her years growing up with her extraordinary family - little Tommy, exuberant amidst the wonders and worries of Germany and Ecuador, of Hungary and Pakistan. She loved the Lord through those precious years of early marriage and family formation – embracing the gifts of adoption – and digging out of her heart a deep and daunting love for Matthew and Sarah. She loved the Lord through all the devastating loss of loved ones – mother Sarah, brother Jaybird. and brother-in-law Greg. She loved the Lord amidst the color and complexity of University Heights, the rural riches of West Delhi, the urban energy of Durham, and the desolate beauty of North Dakota. She loved the Lord amidst the delights and demands of Executive service – defending a dysfunctional denomination, administering complex communities, and always imagining a vision as just and generous as the grace of God. She loved the Lord through the wonder of Juan Diego and Stella, and the gift of a strong, quiet son-in-law. And, Arabella loved the Lord though 37 years of magnificent marriage – a strong and deep love, steeped in honesty and passion and creativity and fidelity – a cherishing of each other that often brought tears to my eyes. Yes, it was the love of the Lord that grounded Arabella’s abiding love for Rob – the best gift God ever gave her.

Friends, how much do we love the Lord? How consistently do we love the Lord? How much do we claim the Way, the Truth, and the Life – and live it to its fullest? And are we able to affirm this faith even when the snares of death encompass us and the pangs of Sheol lay hold of us? These are the questions and the challenges which Arabella’s life – and death – lay before us.

A second testimony which Arabella leaves us this day is also a direct thank you to each one of you. In quoting the psalmist, she affirms that through her life and her sickness and her death, she was saved again and again and again. And how grateful she was that so many of you were the channels through which God’s salvation came to her – again and again and again. The Hebrew word for salvation is the same root word for health and wholeness – and again and again Arabella was healed – by your e-mails, your flowers, your letters, your phone calls, your gifts, your laughter, your presence – and most of all your prayers. She was healed – made whole – saved through the fierce and stubborn wisdom of her doctor, the patient and steadfast love of her

nurses, the toxic and tenacious power of her chemo, and most of all her steadfast trust in the love and presence of the Lord.

Arabella was both relentlessly realistic and humbly hopeful about her illness. She planned to live 20 years, but was prepared to live 6 months. She dreamed about her grandchildren's children, and yet cherished each visit knowing it could be her last. And she was not a pollyanna about the suffering and pain she endured. In an e-mail dated a month before she died, Arabella offered an honest description of her physical struggle, of her newfound need to listen to and to love her deteriorating body - the growing exhaustion, the unpredictable indignities, the weak knees, the eyes tearing up, the endless array of pills - and yet also the comfort of baths, the healing of naps, the joy of cooking even when she couldn't eat, and the exquisite gift of Rob's quotidian company.

Yes, persistently, in the verdant valleys of living and the dark valleys of sickness, Arabella was saved again and again and again. And on December 17th - at 4:30 in the morning, came the final healing - the final act of salvation and wholeness - the release from this mortal life into God's eternal life - her baptism complete in death - her full participation welcomed by the communion of the saints - in what the psalmist calls the land of the living - what the Gospel calls that mansion with many rooms - with one particular parlor set aside for her. Yes, like the Apostle Paul, Arabella was "convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come,"... nor cancer nor chemo nor chaos..."nor anything else in all of creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Which leads to Arabella's final testimony and her charge to us. What shall we return to the Lord for all his bounty to us? We will call upon the name of the Lord, we will lift the cup of salvation again and again, we will pay our vows to the Lord - always offering our praise and thanksgiving. In other words, folks, it's not about us. It's about God. It's not about death. It's about life. It's not about endings. It's about beginnings.

And so, in these moments of remembering - remembering all of it - I hear words of Arabella wisdom - wrapped in praise and thanksgiving and testimony to the bounty of the Lord. So, listen up, as we commit ourselves to honor Arabella with the faithfulness of our own living. This is what her life says to us:

Experience each person and each day and each indignity and each crisis and each opportunity and each dilemma as an exquisite gift from God.

Speak the truth always - tender truth, tenacious truth, and if necessary, tough truth.

Eat, drink, and be merry - most of the time in moderation.

Celebrate differences.

Practice joy and justice - in Jesus' name.

Pay attention to beauty.

Cherish friends and family.

Pray constantly - and then pray some more.

Avoid the spotlight, and worry about someone besides yourself.

Stop playing politics with the precious gift of the church.

In all times and in all places - glorify God and enjoy God forever.

And, dear ones, always remember the peace that only Jesus can bring - peace not as the world knows it - but peace that only our eternal, ineffable, and imaginative God can give us. Do not let your hearts be troubled. And do not let them be afraid.

One of the last songs that Arabella loved to hum, to hear, to breathe is by Joan Baez. And so I close with these lyrics - Arabella's blessing to us:

I believe in prophecy...
And I believe in miracles.
Something sacred burning in every bush and tree...

[And]... I believe in God and God ain't me.

I've traveled around the world,
Stood on mighty mountains and gazed across the wilderness...,
Every day that passes I'm sure about a little bit less.
Even my money keeps telling me it's God I need to trust.

And I believe in God, but God ain't us.

God, in my little understanding, don't care what name I call.
Whether or not I believe doesn't matter at all.
I receive the blessings
That every day on Earth's another chance to get it right.
[to]...let this little light of mine shine and rage against the night..

[And].... I believe in God, and God is God.

May it be so - for you and for me. Amen

- SUSAN ANDREWS
January 2010



MIDPOINT is published *midpoint* between meetings of the Presbytery of New York City. Submissions and photos are invited. Though some submissions are edited for brevity and clarity, it is the Executive Presbyter who decides what is included, the order of articles, and how submissions may be edited.

Photos should be digital (i.e. email-able) and should include full descriptions of the subject(s) in the photographs: full names, church membership, etc. Pictures taken with cell phones cannot be used.

Email address is midpoint@presbynyc.org.



Presbytery Staff at a retreat in March at STONY POINT CENTER. Left to right: DAVID RICHARDSON, AGNES BLACKMON, JAMES TSE, SHIRLEY FLEMING, CORNELL EDMONDS, CARMEN AUSTIN, JANET PEARSON, LILLY SANTIAGO, ANNIE RAWLINGS, YZETTE SWAVY-LIPTON, and OSCAR McCLOUD

BOARD OF PENSIONS

CHANGES TO MEDICAL BENEFITS NOW IN EFFECT

The changes to your medical benefits are now in effect. These updates, along with an overview of your other healthcare benefits, are outlined in a new booklet – Your Healthcare Benefits in Brief – which was mailed in late December. The information includes:

- changes to deductibles and out-of-pocket costs
- the new health management service provider (see next article)
- expanded coverage for children with congenital developmental disabilities
- an increase in the maximum lifetime benefit

Details about the changes are also provided in two e-learning modules developed by the Board:

- Medical Plan Changes for Active Benefits Plan Members
- Medicare Supplement Program Changes for Retired Benefits Plan Members

If you have questions about the changes, please contact the Board at 800-773-7752 (800-PRESPLAN).

YOUR NEW HEALTH MANAGEMENT SERVICE PROVIDER

Effective January 1, 2010, ActiveHealth Management® replaced – and expanded upon – the health management services formerly provided by CareAllies. These services include:

- Pre-Certification – You or your doctor must call ActiveHealth at 866-794-3127 to pre-certify tests and procedures that require advance approval. (See the back of your medical identification card for details.)
- Informed Care Management – ActiveHealth provides support services to help you take control of chronic conditions.

- Personal Health Record – This confidential online tool will help you collect and organize your health records. Look for this tool in spring 2010.
- Case Management – This program provides assistance in coordinating medical care and treatment for a serious injury or long-term illness.
- 24-Hour Nurse Line – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, registered nurses are available to answer your health questions.

If you have questions about the programs and services available through ActiveHealth Management, please call the Board at 800-773-7752 (800-PRESPLAN).

NEW HIGHMARK IDENTIFICATION CARDS MAILED

The new Highmark identification cards were mailed at the end of December. Be sure to carry this new card and your Express Scripts card for routine and emergency use.

Note: You no longer need to carry your CIGNA Behavioral Health card for your mental health and Employee Assistance Program needs. The phone number for participation verification, pre-certification, and questions is now included on the back of the Highmark ID cards.

SUBMIT SALARY CHANGES AND CONFIRM SALARIES ONLINE

Church treasurers and business administrators can now submit salary changes or confirm salaries online through a new feature on Benefits Connect, the Board's secure benefits Web site.

Once a church treasurer or business administrator registers for Benefits Connect, he or she will be granted access to this new feature. Changing or confirming salaries will be completed through an easy-to-follow online process.

To register, go to the Pensions.org homepage. Under the Benefits Connect logo, click "Register." Then follow the step-by-step instructions for creating your user profile and establishing your password.

If you have questions about registering for Benefits Connect or the new online salary change and confirmation feature, please contact the Board at 800-773-7752 (800-PRESPLAN).

TAX RESOURCES ON PENSIONS.ORG

The replay of the 2009 Tax Tips Webinar for Ministers and Churches is now available on Pensions.org. This annual one-hour event is designed to help ministers and churches understand clergy taxes.

Host Paul Payton welcomes renowned clergy and church tax expert Richard R. Hammar, J.D., LL.M., CPA, and Steven Fleming, a Board education specialist. They offer helpful information and tips on numerous topics, such as legislative developments and court rulings, ongoing tax issues, and saving for retirement.

Also prepared by clergy tax expert Richard R. Hammar, the 2009 edition of the Tax Guide for Ministers & Churches will be available in the Tax Resource Center in late January 2010. Published annually, the guide provides an up-to-date and authoritative discussion of tax-reporting compliance and the impact of recent changes in tax laws. It serves as a roadmap for minister members in navigating the complexity of the changing tax code. The guide also contains step-by-step instructions and examples for situations specific to your tax return.

The information provided in the above-described resources is not intended as a substitute for legal, accounting, or other professional advice that you may require while preparing your tax returns.

STEWARDSHIP OF SELF-WELLNESS TIP:

Get your blood pressure checked this month. Almost one-third of people with high blood pressure don't realize they have this potentially dangerous condition. Identify high blood pressure and other conditions before they become serious by using the Board of Pensions' preventive health benefit.

The Rev. JOSEPH PANG (CORNERSTONE) and Elder MARION WOOD (FEATHERBED LANE) at recent COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY meeting.



DIRECTORY

Meeting dates change more frequently than newsletters are published. Meeting dates are set at a Committee's latest meeting but, if a change is made, the Chair should contact members by phone, email or mail. You may also call **SHIRLEY FLEMING**, receptionist, for dates and times.

OSCAR McLOUD , ACTING EXECUTIVE PRESBYTER	4128	omcloud@presbynyc.org
Assistant and Office Manager YZETTE SWAVY-LIPTON	4163	yswavylipton@presbynyc.org
General Council	Board of Trustees	Loan Approval Committee
Committee on Ministry	Disaster Task Force	
Personnel Committee	Strategic Planning	
CORNELL EDMONDS , STATED CLERK	4333	sc@presbynyc.org
Assistant CARMEN AUSTIN	4374	caustin@presbynyc.org
Committee on Nominations	Committee on Session Records	Sexual Misconduct Response & Care Team
Committee on Representation	and Review	
Permanent Judicial Commission	Committee on Standing Rules	General Council
	and Overtures	Board of Trustees
AGNES BLACKMON , ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE PRESBYTER (int.)	4203	ablackmon@presbynyc.org
Assistant LILLY SANTIAGO	4256	lsantiago@presbynyc.org
Council for Congregational Ministry & Nurture	Committee on Developing Congregations	
ANNIE RAWLINGS , ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE PRESBYTER (int.)	4249	socialwitness@presbynyc.org
Assistant LILLY SANTIAGO	4256	lsantiago@presbynyc.org
Council for Witness to Society and the World	Self Development of People	
DAVID RICHARDSON , ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE PRESBYTER (int.)	4322	drichardson@presbynyc.org
Assistant LILLY SANTIAGO	4256	lsantiago@presbynyc.org
Committee on Preparation for Ministry	Committee on Preparation for Lay Ministry	
JAMES TSE , FINANCE MGR.	4209	jtse@presbynyc.org
Council for Administrative and Support Services		
PETER MOORE , PROPERTY SUPPORT MANAGER	4324	pmoore@presbynyc.org
Property Support Committee		
SHIRLEY FLEMING , GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	4325	receptionist@presbynyc.org
JANET PEARSON , YOUTH COORDINATOR	4326	jpearson@presbynyc.org

Embody God's Love • Proclaim God's Word • Promote God's Peace