



Into the Wilderness...



By PASTOR ERIC LEDERMANN

It's difficult to image how an entire people must have felt as they entered the wilderness and were left to fend for themselves. They had to leave all they had known—lands, people, places, customs, traditions.

Who did you imagine I was writing about? It could be the Israelites leaving captivity in Egypt and entering into an unknown future beyond the Red Sea. It could be indigenous people in the U.S. or around the world who are often moved to less desirable land so their occupiers can take their ancestral lands. It could be people who have had to their homelands in Central America to head north because there are no jobs where they are, or because they have been forced from their lands by cartels, gangs, and even their own corrupt governments. I could be writing about refugees around the world who have for centuries been forced to leave their homelands out desperation. The list is nearly endless.

Regardless of whether or not there is hope for a better future, heading into the great unknown is scary. People do it every day for all kinds of reasons. The wil-

derness could even be the hunt for a job after getting laid off because of COVID-19. The wilderness could be losing one's home because of that job loss and suddenly being homeless.

While I was on sabbatical last year I went on several adventures while not really knowing what to expect. The first was a backpacking trip on the Northville-Lake Placid Trail in New York's Adirondack mountains. I prepped for months with my friend who is practically a mountain goat when it comes to the outdoors. The first day I did really well. We were about to finish our 12th and final mile for the day, mostly up hill, when something in my calf suddenly popped. I felt it and heard it (or, at least I think I heard it). The pain shot through my entire leg. We made it to our campsite just a few hundred feet away. I had no idea what had just happened. I nursed my aching calf all evening. I had to talk with my friend about possibly bowing out the next day, heading back to the road and hitching back into town.

The next morning I talked my friend

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This issue of the
UPC NEWS & Current Events
is brought to you by...
the word...

Restoration

From the Latin *restauratio*, meaning to return something back to its original state. Of course, it can refer to objects being restored to the former glory (e.g., a restored car or house). It can also refer to environmental restoration—the recovery of depleted resources. In the psychology world, restoration theories try to explain how a "restorative environment" can improve the mental wellbeing and even concentration of those immersed in it, thus reducing stress, mental fatigue, and negative emotions. Jesus taught a restorative justice that sought to return people to healthy relationships with God, each other, and with the environment. Jesus sought to redeem people, not punish them.

WILDERNESS

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and his son to keep going and finish the 105 mile trek to Lake Placid (he had hiked this trail at least once before). I decided to at least hang out for a couple of days. I had food for five days and was on the edge of a lake. It was beautiful. I may as well enjoy it for a while. My leg wasn't hurting at all, but I knew it would be risky to try continuing.

About 45 minutes after they left, I decided to just hike in a few more miles on what had seemed like a very well marked trail. I packed up camp and headed out. Before long my body seemed to go into high gear. I felt amazing and was making incredible time (the uphill 12 miles the day before must have been good for my legs). Before long I was already 4 miles into what was supposed to only be an 8 hour day. It was then, at the top of a ridge, that I completely lost the trail in the forest. There was no clear trail on the leaf covered ground, and the little blue medallions attached to trees all along the trail disappeared. I could still see the one behind me, but not in front of me.

I looked at my map and could see about where the trail should have gone. I decided to move forward and see if I can find the trail. After about an hour, no sign of the trail. After two hours of now bush-whacking my way down the hill and I realized I wasn't exactly sure where I was.

After three hours, I started to panic.

I've been hiking and backpacking many times over the years. I had the clarity of mind to just stop, have some lunch, and clear my head. I found myself in the middle of a boggy swamp. I took off my pack, set it on a bit of somewhat dry moss, sat on a log, and had lunch while I just enjoyed the view.

After resting for about 30 minutes, I took out my map and compass and tried to figure out where I was. I remembered the stream and which direction the water flowed. Lucky for me, I accidentally read my compass wrong and headed in the correct direction. Before long, I began seeing rock formations that were familiar. There it is! The ridge where I lost my way! I headed for it and found where I had gotten off the trail. Still no sign of the little blue circles to the right that were supposed to lead my way. I thought to myself how great it would have been to surprise my friend and his son at the next camp site. But, after having lost my way for nearly 4 hours, there as no way I could make it before nightfall. I decided to head left, back the way I came and back to the same camp site. It rained the whole way there.

I arrived to a soggy camp site. Set up my tent and cooked myself some dinner. Sitting in the rain eating my warm rice and veggies, I felt defeated. I know I made the right decision to not go with them at the

See WILDERNESS on page 11

MONTHLY CANNED FOOD DRIVE

OCTOBER 25, 2020

Fourth Sunday of each month! Drop off at church!

Food pantries are often short of money and protein foods. The pantry at Tempe Community Action Agency (TCAA) needs your contributions of:



- tuna
- beans
- canned meats
- ramen noodles
- canned vegetables
- soups

Drop off food donations Sunday mornings in the bins in the narthex.

Financial contributions may be sent to the office (make checks out to "TCAA") with "Food Pantry" in the memo).



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Tuesday-Thursday: 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
(Closed for lunch 12:00 p.m. -1:00 p.m.)
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Requirements:

Announcements: 500 words or less
Articles/Reflections: 1200 words or less
Letters to the Editor: 750 words or less
Submissions may be edited for content, grammar, and space available.

Send submissions by the 20th of each month to: newsletter@upctempe.org

An Attitude of Gratitude

By REV. BEV PHILLIPS

That sounds like such a rhyming cliché: an attitude of gratitude. A few years ago Oprah Winfrey made it popular. She believes it, practices it and preaches it, as many of us did and do. What makes it sound like a cliché is that the makers of bumper stickers, tee shirts, posters, ball caps, and jewelry found it to be a good seller.

The practice has been of interest to ancient, medieval and modern theologians and is the focus of the world's main religions: Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish, Baha'i, and Hindu. Worship with gratitude to God is a common theme in these religions. So it is not just a cliché and it is one that needs to be practiced in these times of so much suffering.

In the book, *The Book of Joy*, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop

Desmond Tutu (with Douglas Abrams) devote a chapter to the practice of gratitude.

Gratitude is the recognition of all that holds us in the web of life and all that has made it possible to have the life that we have and the moment that we are experiencing. Thanksgiving is a natural response to life and may be the only way to savor it. Both Christian and Buddhist traditions, perhaps all spiritual traditions, recognize the importance of gratefulness. It allows us to shift our perspective, as the Dalai Lama and the Archbishop counseled, toward all we have been given and all that we have. It moves us away from the narrow-minded focus on fault and lack and to the wider perspective of benefit and abundance. (page 242)

Here is a quote from Oprah:

Being grateful all the time isn't easy. But it's when you least feel thankful that you are most in need of what gratitude

can give you: perspective. Gratitude can transform any situation. It alters your vibration, moving you from negative energy to positive. It's the quickest, easiest most powerful way to effect change in your life — this I know for sure.

Some mornings when I first wake up, even before I have gotten out of bed I think, "Oh, no! Here comes another day of pandemic and politics!" I just feel sad and somewhat lost. But the mornings when I wake up and give thanks for how good God is to me, I can feel hope. I am sure that I am preaching to the choir on this matter of gratitude and that many of you could have said it better than I have. The best way to survive what we are experiencing now is to express gratitude for all that is good and beautiful in our lives. ■

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National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK
(1-800-273-8255)

Talk to someone.

If you're thinking about suicide, are worried about a friend or loved one, or would like emotional support, the Lifeline network is available 24/7 across the United States.

En Español: 1-888-628-9454
Hard of Hearing: 1-800-799-4889
Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255

'Power and Privilege' Observances Among Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Action Items

Consultant's report suggests multiple changes, including antiracism work, gender roles and language use

By MIKE FERGUSON

Presbyterian News Service

Cultural humility training, a report on power and privilege observances among board members and committee meetings and reports are among the three days of business in front of the [Presbyterian Mission Agency Board](#) the week of Oct. 5, 2020.

Beginning Wednesday, the Board has five sessions scheduled: Noon-3 p.m. Eastern Time and 4 p.m.-7 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday and noon-4 p.m. Friday. Each session will be held via Zoom. The agenda includes two closed sessions, from 1:20-2:45 p.m. Thursday and from 1:15 p.m. through 3:15 p.m. Friday.

In a report to the board, Marian R. Vasser, a consultant and the executive director for Diversity and Equity and the University of Louisville, discusses what she observed during four board meetings — two in person and two virtual. Vasser's report is scheduled for discussion at 4:30 p.m. Thursday.

According to Vasser's report, several observations "threaten PMAB's commitment to be fully committed to the Matthew 25 agenda." Among them:

Ableism: Several times, speakers did not use microphones.

Antiracism/diversity/social justice efforts: Except for one conversation led by a white man, Vasser observed that conversations on these topics fell on the shoulders of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) board members and staff. "There is visible discomfort during conversations around white supremacy and white privilege," Vasser wrote. "During the presentation of Racial Equity findings, several white attendees were visibly checked out, and likely were

unaware of the findings. This was very noticeable as some even left the room for an extended period of time, returning immediately upon completion of the report."

Closed sessions: Vasser was omitted from closed sessions, "which is a critical point of observation," Vasser wrote. "These are times where power and privilege are most prevalent, as folk tend to be navigating stressful environments, leaving them vulnerable to authentic



engagement. This was a missed opportunity."

Gender roles: "Questions that are more emotional and subjective were consistently deferred to women, while more concrete and procedural questions were directed towards men," Vasser wrote. "There are patterns, in terms of committee composition and leadership as well. Committees with a specific focus on nurturing, social justice, etc., are typically led by and/or reported out by women. Committees focusing more on budget and policies are typically led by and/or reported out by men."

Guarding space: Vasser observed white people standing on the perimeter, "moving around and conversing freely

throughout presentations. It gave the appearance of white folk 'guarding the space,' if you will ... There was a clear sense of freedom and ownership." When the conversation transitioned to racial justice, Vasser observed more white people staying in their seats while BIPOC members "seemed to move about more freely ... It was as if they felt 'at home' during this discussion. It was really interesting to observe. Upon conclusion of the racial justice conversation, the dynamics literally returned to white folk moving more freely and often." The one exception Vasser noted was that the Rev. Dr. Diane Moffett, president and executive director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, who is a Black woman, "moved around the room freely. It is unclear if this exception was a direct result of the position of power or not." Vasser recommends this finding on "guarding space" "be called out specifically ... This particular trend was reported out during the initial meeting and there was a noticeable change at subsequent meetings. It is important to continue making regular announcements until the space feels safe for all."

Language: Phrases including "living beyond our means" tend to be "coded as maintaining the status quo," Vasser wrote. "This could threaten the ability to reimagine how funding is used to address inequities." Phrases such as "our/my staff" suggest property, "which traces back to slavery." Consider instead, Vasser suggested, terms such as "team," "colleagues" or "associates" — or at least dropping "our" or "my" and just say "staff," Vasser wrote.

Liberal white women: "While there

See POWER AND PRIVILEGE on page 11

Presbyterian Women News

Action in the Time of COVID-19

At this time all events have been put on hold. Hope that all of us stay healthy.

It is our hope that all women who attended meetings this year feel that they have been both spiritually enriched by the study and nourished through fellowship and sharing with other women. Thanks to all the women who provided hospitality and prepared and led lessons for their circle. We all look forward to another great year at the end of summer when we begin our 2020-2021 season.

Upcoming...

The Fall Mission Focus is **El Buen** (Sep. 10), **Justa Center** (Oct. 2), and **Dream Center/Street Light USA** (Nov. 12).

The UPC PW Coordinating Team met several weeks ago to plan events and activities for the coming year, keeping the health and safety of our congregation as a primary concern.

First, we are delighted to announce the establishment of a third Circle based in Friendship Village to join Kayenta and Chinle. All women of the church are invited to join in the *Horizon's* bible study, *Into the Light: Finding Hope through Prayers of Lament*, and share in fellowship.

Chinle Circle will be meeting the third Wednesday in October. Look for details from your circle chair for time and place. Kayenta and Friendship Village will meet together via Zoom the fourth Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. Meetings will be Sep. 28, Oct. 26, Nov. 23 and Dec. 14 at 7:00 p.m. Circle leaders will provide information on access to the Zoom meetings to their members. The *PW Yearbook* is now available in digital format. If you have not received it by email, please contact Chris Casanova at wecasa@aol.com.

The backbone of PW has always been to help those in need. Without access to the congregation on Sundays, PW will reach out through a monthly "Mission Focus Hour" via Zoom for information and fellowship. Suzanne Neimann is coordinating the meetings which begin at 1:00 p.m. and will include time for fellowship. Information regarding access to the meetings will be coming out in the UPC Weekly Update email. Should you wish to donate to any cause, please make your donations payable to UPC PW with the organization's name in the memo line and drop them off to the office. As always, PW wishes to thank you in ad-

vance for your generosity.

Due to COVID 19, PW was unable to collect the 2020 Birthday Offering this past spring. However, PW is delighted to be able to contribute to the grant recipient from the Presbytery of the Grand Canyon through a special offering. Money from this offering will go to the building and renovation of the Community Presbyterian Child Learning Center of Payson, Arizona, that provides childcare services to families from Payson, Tonto Apache tribes and neighboring communities. Contributions can be mailed to the church office or left in the office mail slot. Checks can be made out to UPC PW with Payson or Child Center in the memo line.

PW sponsored fall activities and events may be adjusted as we move through the calendar year. We will keep you apprised of our continued efforts through the weekly newsletters. We understand that our "new normal" has required all of us to think outside the box. But if we remain true to our faith and endeavors to help others, we will continue to do good work. ■



Come Help With I-HELP

Next Evening of Hosting—Fri., Oct. 16, 2020



UPC continues to be a leading and actively participating congregation in a number of missions to help the homeless and hungry, including Family Promise, Meals on Wheels, and I-HELP.

It takes a community of volunteers to offer these services to the most vulnerable members of our wider community. Thank you to those who have helped UPC continue this important ministry. Working together we have provided food and shelter to about 40 homeless men and women every month for over a decade! There are lots of

ways to participate, from helping provide dinner and breakfast items, to donating items like white socks, underwear, T-shirts, disposable razors, toothbrushes, and travel size toiletries. Right now, you can also help if you have extra pillow cases—we could really use them! ■

For more info or to volunteer, contact
Jill Russell at
(602) 315-9026 or via e-mail at
jillzy55@aol.com

6th Annual Intergenerational Talent Show — Oct. 25th (6:30pm)



By **LAWN GRIFFITHS**

Yes, there will be a 6th Annual Intergenerational Talent Show in October! In response to COVID-19, it will be virtual. The whole UPC community is invited to watch online from the comfort of your homes.

Right now, the search is on for performers to create their own cameo acts of up to 5 minutes. Each act will need to record their act, send it in, and it will be formatted into the full talent show that will be presented online on Sunday night, Oct. 25, 6:30 to 8 p.m.

As in past talent shows, you can sing (solo or ensemble), do stand-up comedy, storytelling, reading, a dance number, gymnastics/tumbling, a conversation, instrumental music, teaching a skill to the audience, or just about anything. We especially invite children to share their talents or develop an act.

The link to access the show will be listed in future newsletters and emails.

In past years, before COVID, we held the show live in Fellowship Hall with assorted other activities, including a wacky White Elephant giveaway, youth bake sales and games.

We hope again to have more than a dozen acts, all of whose performers can practice, polish, and then record and submit them. Jim Niemann will handle the formatting.

Please sign up to be in the show with Lawn Griffiths (480) 894-1557 or tempelawn@msn.com.

Performers can tape and send their act to Jim by Sunday, Oct. 4: jim.niemann@cox.net.

The committee is exploring other activities to include in the event. More details to come. ■

Youth in Church, Not Just the Future, They're the 'NOW'

PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY

When the Rev. Dr. David Gambrell was asked to speak at the Presbyterian Youth Triennium last year, he knew it would be both challenging and extremely personal.

“Not many preachers have the opportunity to address several thousand teenagers,” he says. “So, I did this with a healthy dose of humility, fear and trembling, especially mindful that one of those teenagers was my own daughter.”

Gambrell is the father of two teenage daughters and an associate for worship in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Office of Theology and Worship. He attends Highland Presbyterian Church in Louisville, where he volunteers to teach confirmation classes and has witnessed

and guided the faith journey of many young people — including his daughters.

As each of us considers a gift to the Pentecost Offering, he says every person, young or old, should understand that ministry with youth is not a one-way street.

“They need to know they are valued — their gifts, wisdom and experiences are important,” Gambrell explains. “They need to know that we take them seriously and honor them as members of Christ’s body and we want to learn from them even as they learn from us.”

That’s one of the things Gina Yeager-Buckley, a mission associate for formation



The Rev. Dr. David Gambrell, associate for worship in the Office of Theology & Worship, preached last year at the Presbyterian Youth Triennium. (Contributed photo)

in the Office of Christian Formation, truly appreciates about being a Presbyterian —

World Food Day

Founded Oct 16, 1945

By ANDREW KANG BART-LETT

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

World Food Day — celebrated on October 16 every year — commemorates the founding in 1945 of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The FAO was created to respond to famines and the tragedy of hunger in a world of God's abundance. Despite the abundance of land, water, nutrients and sunlight on this precious planet, even in the 21st century, hundreds of millions of people go hungry on Oct. 16 and throughout the year.

Each year, Presbyterian congregations join with partners around the country to lift up World Food Day during the Food Week of Action — October 11–18. Food Week of Action starts the Sunday before World Food Day and ends on the Sunday after it. This week also includes the International Day for Rural Women (Oct. 15) and the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (Oct. 17).

This year especially, as the Black Lives Matter movement spreads across all sectors of society, we must understand that our food grows on land stolen from Native peoples and that it is a system founded on plantation agriculture and slavery. Furthermore, that racism continues to taint many aspects of the food chain in addition to despoiling God's Creation. The very workers who provide our daily bread — those who plant, harvest, and serve our food — are disproportionately people of color and are subjected to dangerous conditions and poverty wages. During Food Week especially, we commit to act. We commit to work for policies, at



the local, state and national levels, and to spend our dollars on food produced and brought to us in ways that promote a sustainable, just and equitable food system.

The theme of this year's Food Week is "hopeful harvest," because thousands of groups around the world are working tirelessly for a food system that puts people and God's Creation first. As communities around the world face the pandemic and vulnerable food chains, people are realizing the necessity of more resilient agricultural systems that treat workers well and protect the planet. Family farmers, fishers and other producers are adopting and spreading agroecological practices and pushing for food sovereignty. Food Week highlights the actions and campaigns for the 60-plus cosponsoring organizations that are building a better food system — while also tackling the economic and ra-

cial drivers of hunger, poverty and oppression.

Find more information on the Food Week of Action and World Food Day at pcusa.org/foodweek.

In your congregation, everyone can learn more about eating and the related issues of health, environment, the sacredness of food, and community building with the "Just Eating: Practicing Our Faith at the Table" curriculum. The curriculum has spurred new farmers markets, advocacy on the Farm Bill, and church-based food initiatives. Go to pcusa.org/justeating to download the free curriculum. You may also get ideas from the "Food Sovereignty for All: Overhauling Our Food System with Faith-Based Initiatives Guide" found at: bit.ly/phpfoodfaith. ■

Educate a Child, Transform the World



By **REV. DAVE BROWN**

Educate a Child Roundtable

Beginning with John Calvin's support of free schools, people of the Reformed tradition have always affirmed the value of education and its potential to transform lives and systems." — PC(USA) Policy Statement "Loving Our Neighbors: Equity and Quality in Public Education"

Presbyterians have always supported public education. Jesus calls us to love God with "heart, soul and mind." Our Reformed tradition affirms education as one way we develop our mind and one way we love God. The PC(USA)'s most recent policy statement on public education stands in that tradition and recognizes "that quality public schools are essen-

tial to our society's efforts to overcome poverty and address social inequality." The policy statement states that "quality public schools offer a holistic education, one that equips our children to live both meaningful and productive lives. A quality public school ... is a place where they learn to think critically and become effective citizens, where they gain an appreciation for the sweep of human history and for the arts. Public schools are one place where children and young people can learn about their own bodies, how to be healthy and stay fit." The study acknowledges the role of private and charter schools while affirming that quality public schools impact most of our children. Loving our neighbor means loving our neighbors' children and supporting the public schools, even if we do not have children attending those schools.

The Educate a Child Roundtable (which grew out of the Educate a Child, Transform the World initiative launched at the 221st General Assembly in Detroit in 2014) is working to encourage and resource Presbyterian congregations around issues related to public schools. The roundtable has written and approved

the "Educate a Child Covenant." It is in the process of developing resources. This covenant will be a way that congregations can publicly commit to actively supporting public education and become part of a network of congregations who share that commitment.

There are many ways that congregations can support public education, including recognizing and affirming educators and students in worship at the beginning of the school year, providing resources to teachers who purchase supplies with their own money, starting a before- or after-school learning center and supporting legislation that improves schools. On the presbytery level, committee member Renee Danyo reports that in 2018, the Presbytery of Detroit launched an Educate a Child Workgroup. The workgroup aims to network congregations within the Presbytery of Detroit to provide direct services and to advocate for public education. In October 2019, the workgroup hosted its first workshop to educate, encourage and support congregations to become active in building and fostering relationships with schools in communities with high poverty and advocate to support public education. ■



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UPC News & Current Events

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Worship Volunteer Opportunity Children's Moment Leaders

By **SADA REED**

Worship Committee Co-chair

The Worship Committee is seeking people interested in giving the children's moment over Zoom during our online Sunday worship services.

Look over the dates below and, if interested, please contact me at:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oct 18 | <input type="checkbox"/> Dec 27 | <input type="checkbox"/> May 9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oct 25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Jan 10, 2021, | <input type="checkbox"/> May 30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nov 15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Feb 14 | <input type="checkbox"/> Jul 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dec 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> Apr 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> Jul 18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dec 20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Apr 18 | <input type="checkbox"/> Jul 25 |

Presbyterians Urged to Exercise Right to Vote

PC(USA) Votes 2020 will emphasize 'sacred duty' and marginalized communities

By DARLA CARTER

Presbyterian News Service

With the Nov. 3 presidential election just around the corner, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has launched a campaign to increase voter turnout, particularly among people of color.

The online campaign officially kicked off Monday with a video featuring Christian Brooks, Associate for Domestic Issues in the [Office of Public Witness](#) (OPW).

"We are so excited to kick off our virtual [PC\(USA\) Votes 2020 campaign](#), which was created to engage and motivate people to exercise their right to vote, especially those who are a part of marginalized communities," said Brooks, one of the lead organizers.

The Rev. Shanea Leonard, Associate for Gender & Racial Justice for [Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries](#), explained, "There is an undeniable history in this country of voter suppression of Black and brown people that cannot be ignored, and although we cannot erase the past, we can do all we can to help shift the narrative in the present and future."

The new campaign, which includes a website, webinars, a social media campaign, "Did You Know?" facts and various educational resources, is a follow-up to the recent [Presbyterian Week of Action](#), which affirmed that Black lives matter and that violence against oppressed people must stop.

"As a denomination, we have affirmed our commitment to justice and ending racism," said Leonard, co-organizer of the PC(USA) Votes campaign. "Therefore, it is in alignment with our core values and policies to promote justice and equality, even in our legislative system."

Presbyterians and other like-minded individuals with a desire to end structural racism and see the country change for the better can take a step toward making that happen by showing up at the polls or



Go to www.pcusa.org/vote to see the launch video, featuring Christian Brooks of the Office of Public Witness. (Screen shot)

requesting and completing their absentee ballots.

"As people of faith, it is our sacred duty to participate in the electoral process," Brooks said. "We are called to vote by our faith convictions at the polls — convictions that are grounded on principles of a faithful commitment to beloved community. By participating in the election on November 3, 2020, we are continuing to take a stand and bear witness to issues of justice."

OPW will host a webinar Tuesday to educate the public about voting methods and why it's important for people of faith to vote. The 1:30 p.m. (EST) event, "Engaging in the 2020 Election," will feature Sister Quincy Howard of NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice, and Brooks of OPW, which is one of the [Compassion, Peace & Justice](#) ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Register for Tuesday's webinar [here](#).

"We'll go over vote by mail, early voting, in-person voting ... and then we're going to go over what folks can do to make sure this election runs smoothly," such as signing up to be poll workers and reporting voter suppression, Brooks

said.

Some other events include a Faith and Voting Bible Study on Oct. 13; a Faith Perspective on Voting Rights webinar Oct. 28; and an election night special featuring the Rev. Lee Catoe and Destini Hodges, the hosts of ["Just Talk Live."](#)

The PC(USA) Votes 2020 campaign is being done in partnership with Racial Equity and Women's Intercultural Ministries, which is holding its own [October Election-Fest](#).

Throughout the four-week PC(USA) Votes campaign, the Presbyterian News Service will publish various articles on voting, highlighting themes including diversity and voter suppression. There also will be a film showing, and the [Presbyterian Historical Society](#) will be highlighting the church's history of advocacy, action and voter engagement.

The organizers want to uplift a variety of Presbyterian voices and call attention to "obstacles faced within our denomination," Leonard said. "Voting is still not an equal playing field for all."

For a full listing of events and themes for PC(USA) Votes 2020, go to www.pcusa.org/vote. ■

Why Are Presbyterians Sticking Their Noses in Politics?

Leaders in PC(USA) ministries say involvement in 'political' issues is foundational to faith



The Rev. Christian Brooks (left) and Rev. Jimmie Hawkins spoke to Presbyterian gathering at Ecumenical Advocacy Days 2019 in Arlington, Virginia. (Photo by Rich Copley)

By **RICH COPLEY**
Presbyterian News Service

They are questions the Rev. Jimmie Hawkins gets over and over doing his work as the director of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [Office of Public Witness](#) (OPW) on Capitol Hill:

Why are Presbyterians getting involved in politics?

Isn't there separation of church and state?

Shouldn't you be preaching the gospel?

"We are speaking out following the mandate we have received from Jesus and from Scripture," Hawkins says. "You cannot read Scripture and not talk about justice. It's throughout the pages. As a matter of fact, the second book of the Bible, the Book of Exodus, is about deliverance from slavery and how God intervened to set right that which is wrong.

"I think people have a real misperception of what it means to be a person of faith, especially in this American context we're in. People talk about separation of church and state and think that means there's no engagement. That's not what it means. Actually, it's to protect our rights as people of faith so the government can't dictate to us what to believe and how we are to do it. But it does not say we cannot be involved."

Hawkins cites the Johnson Amendment, 1954 legislation introduced by then-Senator, later President Lyndon B. Johnson, which said nonprofit organizations, including churches, could not endorse or oppose political candidates. But that, Hawkins notes, is where it ends. No endorsements and no financial contributions to or from politicians.

Speaking out on issues, Hawkins and others say, is following the lead of Jesus Christ.

"As we look throughout the Scriptures, especially in the New Testament, we see Jesus talking about how you have some people being greedy and taking advantage of women, taking advantage of the poor and how that wasn't right," said the Rev. Christian Brooks, Representative for Domestic Poverty Issues in OPW and co-founder of the [Presbyterian Voting Campaign](#). "As we're still talking through those issues, we have to talk about the effects of that, the effects of taking advantage of the poor, taking advantage of marginalized communities, which includes things like food insecurity and homelessness. Also, as we are in community with folks we have to speak to the issues that they live with.

"I can't say that I love my neighbor, I love you, you're hungry, but I'm not saying anything about the fact that you're hungry," Brooks said. "I'm not addressing the root causes of why you're hungry. I'm not speaking out against the policies that are putting you in the position to be hungry."

One part of the reason people sometimes don't understand why Presbyterian leaders speak out on political issues is that mainstream evangelical Christianity in the United States emphasizes a message of personal salvation that some think should be the sole focus of ministry.

"If you claim yourself as a Christian, it's not just preaching that everybody needs to be saved, and all this other kind of thing this warped American Christianity has done," says the Rev. Lee Catoe, Managing Editor of [Unbound, an online Christian social justice journal](#) produced by the [Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy](#), where Catoe is the associate for Young Adult Social Witness.

POWER AND PRIVILEGE

Continued from page 4

were several occurrences, most notably were white women who repeatedly inserted themselves in the space designated for the consultant, offering tips and advice,” Vasser wrote. “While the intent may have been good, there was a clear assumption that the consultant was not skilled or wise enough to identify power and privilege without assistance.” Vasser said during one Board meeting, a white woman pulled up a chair at the “clearly isolated” table where Vasser was sitting and observing. The woman was “not at all shy about trying to read what I was typing.”

Lodging and seating: “The energy in the room was noticeable when staff got a chance to join the board in the front of the room for dialogue,” Vasser said of one of the four meetings observed. “Staff were visibly excited to move to the front of the room and engage with the board.

The energy shifted in a positive way and was more inclusive and energizing. The energy immediately returned to the status quo after the dialogue and they were instructed to head back to their seats. I could have had my eyes closed and would have felt the energy drop significantly.” Vasser recommends combining board and staff seating.

Rendered invisible (people of Asian descent): Most notable for Vasser was a conversation she was having with a woman of Asian descent, who was “interrupted and disregarded by a white woman.” Vasser recommends incorporating presenters “who are experts in Asian studies with the goal of increasing awareness and cultural sensitivity around this community.”

Staff: Staff “were only invited to speak and participate as deemed relevant by board members, which was particularly concerning,” Vasser wrote. “This practice remained in place even

during teambuilding and informal activities and was consistent in every in-person meeting.” Staff “not only add a critical lens to the discussion, they tend to be knowledgeable around day-to-day processes and details. There is a critical lens missing when staff are disengaged.”

White fragility: “After the consultant conducted informal report-outs at several meetings, white folk inevitably responded with resistance,” Vasser wrote. “While most were pleasant, it was resistance nonetheless.”

In a summary section, Vasser wrote that if the Board is “truly committed to disrupting power and privilege dynamics, it must be willing to acknowledge how deeply embedded hierarchies and tradition are in this organization ... While this seems like a lot to digest, this is actually typical for an institution with a history directly tied to slavery and discrimination.” ■

WILDERNESS

Continued from page 2

time, but I regretted it at the same time.

I spent the night there, got up the next morning, and headed back into town to find a hotel. I made it back a little after noon., got a hotel room, took a nice warm shower, and called my friend’s mother who lived an hour away. She said she could pick me up the next morning.

For the most part, I knew approximately where I was, even though I did get a little lost. I’ve been lost in the wilderness before and always managed to keep a cool head to find my way out. I also knew I had enough food that could easily stretch into a week if I needed it to. Once I assessed the situation sitting on that log in the boggy marsh, I knew I was going to be okay. But there are millions around the world who don’t have topo maps or blue medallion marked trails to show them the way. They don’t have backpacks with tents, a nice sleeping bag, and a week’s worth of food. More often than not, they leave with what can fit into a small bag, a jug or two of water, and that’s it.



Pastor Eric (right) with his friend, the Rev. Jonathan Malone (middle) and his son Anthony (left).

Right now so much of our nation feels like they are living in a wilderness time without the aid of a compass or a guidebook. We are in uncharted territory in so many ways. But, our nation has been in worse places. This is not to compare, but to re-assure us that if we just sit for a moment, and take stock of the situation, we might realize that we have more resources than we know.

I can’t tell you how the election is going to turn out. I can’t tell you when or

if the Coronavirus will go away, or how many it will take with it. What I can tell you is that we are not alone. In this wilderness time. We have the wits of our community and the presence of God to help us show the way forward. It will be scary. But, we have the tools, and we have the ability to help a whole lot of others find their way too. So, let’s keep up the good work, keep serving in the name of Christ, and keep the faith. We can do this! ■

CHURCH POLITICS

Continued from page 10

“A lot of times we talk about the birth and the death, and we don’t talk about the life of Jesus for 33 years. The man lived and walked on this Earth and was obviously affected by tyrants that ruled the empire. He saw poverty, experienced it. His family was in some ways refugees that had to flee their land because a tyrant was trying to kill them. The foundation of our faith is God walking with us, and that God was human and talked and walked and did all these things, and that is the foundation of what we believe. It is foundational that these things aren’t ‘political.’”

Of course, they note, religion and politics have been intimately tied since the founding of the United States. Scripture was used both to justify slavery, in error, and in the cause of abolition. Churches were bases of operation in movements from the abolition of slavery through the Civil Rights movement and up to today’s calls for social justice from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and other denominations.

But it can be easy to focus solely on personal salvation when you are not facing oppression, the ministry leaders say.

“There is a certain level of privilege in the idea that we shouldn’t be involved in political issues,” Brooks says. “There is a certain privilege and comfort because the folks who are saying that are not the

folks who are fighting to survive and they are not the people experiencing the issues that we are speaking out about.

“When you are not in a position where you have to fight for your survival, you have the option to say, ‘We are not going to engage.’ But when you are faced with engage or die, engage or be hungry, engage or not have anywhere to live, you don’t have an option.”

But there is a difference, the ministers say, between being political and being partisan. The church leaders do not endorse or denounce specific politicians or political parties. They focus on issues. It is up to them and their constituents to decide which leaders best represent their beliefs. And partisanship, they say, can be a trap.

“People can be so partisan they hold onto it when it does not help their situations and does not help their communities,” Catoe says.

Hawkins says he regularly deals with ministers who tell him they have red churches, blue churches or purple churches.

“That’s not your main sense of identity. We’re Christian churches, period,” he says. “All other identities are subject to being a Christian first and foremost. Political identities should not divide us.”

“It’s hard to summon up the inner strength to stand for what you know to be true, but that’s the power of the gospel,” Hawkins said. “That’s what the gospel does for us: It gives us that type of strength, those inner reserves to say, ‘This is what I hear from every facet of life which I live ... but I don’t know. I think there’s something else here.’”

“God keeps nudging us,” Hawkins said, “to explore different ways of looking at things.” ■



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Please don't share your link.

The service will continue to be live streamed to www.upctempe.org/YouTube, but we would love to have you join us live in Zoom for both worship and the fellowship that follows!



Worship Volunteer Schedule

Most of what happens at UPC would not happen if not for an actively involved membership! Below is the schedule of worship volunteers for the next couple of months. If you are listed and have a conflict, you are asked to please find a replacement and then contact Ruling Elder Helen Griffin or Sada Reed, co-chairs of the Worship Committee.

To volunteer or get on one of the rotations, Sada Reed or Helen Griffin! Thank you!

October 2020

Trustee on Duty Position Vacant
Deacon of the Month: Sue Coleman
Sanctuary Readiness Team Carrie Miter, Sharon Tompkins

October 4—Proper 22/ 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Liturgist Helen Griffin
Children's Moment Helen Griffin

October 11—Proper 23/ 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Liturgist Youth
Children's Moment Youth

October 18—Proper 24/ 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Liturgist Jim Hershauer
Children's Moment Jim Hershauer

October 25—Proper 25/ 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Liturgist Steve White
Children's Moment Steve White

November 2020

Trustee on Duty Position Vacant
Deacon of the Month: Wendy Sevlie
Sanctuary Readiness Team Shelly Moe & Jo Maloney

November 1—Proper 26/ 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Liturgist Lawn Griffiths
Children's Moment Suzanne Niemann

November 8—Proper 27/ 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Liturgist Shelly Moe
Children's Moment Shelly Moe

November 15—Proper 28/ 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Liturgist Steve White
Children's Moment Position Vacant

November 22—Proper 26/ 34th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Liturgist Dan Abbott
Children's Moment Dan Abbott

November 29—1st Sunday of Advent

Liturgist Joni Jacobs
Children's Moment Joni Jacobs

YOUTH

Continued from page 6

all people are welcomed into ministry.

"There is no age limit on being called," she says. "It's not just for older adults or the middle-aged. It includes youth, children, young adults and people who are single or married. Presbyterians understand that each of us is called to be in relationship with God and to share our faith."

Yeager-Buckley handles the organization of the Presbyterian Youth Triennium, which is funded in part by the Pentecost Offering. The event is also supported by hundreds of volunteers — half adults, half teenagers — who work to develop the event every three years.

"Putting it together can be challenging. We don't have a lot of money and we have a tiny staff," said Yeager-Buckley. "But we have volunteers who give up their vacation time to help and who work together to truly meet the needs of teenagers as they explore and grow their faith."

The Pentecost Offering supports not only the Presbyterian Youth Triennium. It is meant to unite all Presbyterians in a churchwide effort to support young people and inspire them to share their faith, ideas and unique gifts with both the church and the world.

"We tend to say something like 'we're investing in the future because the youth are the future of our church,'" says Gambrell.

"But our youth already have gifts to give and important ways to serve and lead in the church. Supporting the Offering is a way to give youth the opportunity to do things and share their gifts in the present moment."

Growing up in the church, Gambrell experienced what it meant to be "taken seriously" by other Presbyterians. As a result, he dedicated himself to God's service — first as a young adult mission volunteer doing hurricane relief work and, then later, as a pastor, working through a doctoral program in worship, and now at the national offices.

It has helped him understand that each of us has something to offer the church and the community at all stages of our lives — including children, youth and young adults.

"All of us in the church have a responsibility to support the gifts of young people and experience the joy of connecting with them," said Gambrell. "I think it is part of what it means to be connected in the body of Christ. Each person should consider the grace of God that they have received and think about how they can use those gifts to serve God and serve others — specifically through the youth ministries of the church."

It's a joy Gambrell experienced as both a faith leader and a father. Following his service at the Presbyterian Youth Triennium, he received something that reaffirmed his commitment — a text from his daughter who had attended the service. It read simply, "I'm proud of you, dad." ■

October Birthdays



- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Sada Reed, Leah Gunter | 22 JoAnne Dahlmeier |
| 3 Stan Settles | 23 Beckie Burke |
| 6 Sharon Thompkins | 25 Mara Trella |
| 9 Sara Trower | 28 Jan Felton |
| 10 Mark Miter | 30 Carrie Miter |
| 14 Evelyn Settles | 31 Ashley Nuesse |
| 17 John Griffin | |

Prayers of thanks for all these beautiful lives!

If your birthday is missing or we have the wrong date, please contact the office so we can update our records.

Newsletter Submissions

Poems, Stories, Reflections

UPC actively seeks submissions. Did you have a particular “God moment” you’d like to share? Send stories, information, letters to the congregation, photos, and announcements for the

UPC News & Current Events.

Send submissions to:
newsletter@upctempe.org
and be sure to review the submission requirements on page 2.

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PC(USA) News & Announcements

Available in a daily or weekly digest format
www.pcusa.org/newsupdates

Presbyterian Outlook

An independent magazine covering all things Presbyterian
\$19.95/yr, 18 issues
<https://pres-outlook.org>



Presbyterians Today

Award-winning denominational magazine published by the PC(USA). Also available is a free twice monthly e-newsletter
<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/today>

Presbytery of Grand Canyon Weekly E-focus Newsletter

News and views around our presbytery, and words of wisdom from our presbytery leadership
<https://pbygrandcanyon.org/subscribe-to-efocus>

Let us remember in our prayers...

- ✘ **Homebound:** Evelyn Colby, Gerry Edson, Elaine Murray, Mary Nickerson
- ✘ **Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)** in the U.S.
- ✘ **Communities** bearing the weight of violence in their streets and neighborhoods
- ✘ **Everyone affected by COVID-19**, especial the families of those who have died.
- ✘ **Medical personnel** and first responders on the front lines of battling COVID-19
- ✘ **Indigenous People** who are suffering

under the weight of COVID-19 and hundreds of years of subjugation.

- ✘ **Teachers and students** as they continue online and in-person.
- ✘ **Grant Griffin**
- ✘ **Evelyn Gilmartin**
- ✘ **Helen Alderson**
- ✘ **Don Morton**
- ✘ **Walt Whittard**
- ✘ **Carl and Barb Smith**
- ✘ **All of creation**, and for the strength to stand up for environmental conservation
- ✘ **Elected & community leaders**, that they can bring peace to our nation

and world

- ✘ **Military personnel**, stateside and abroad
- ✘ **Peacemakers/Mission Workers**
- ✘ **Our nation and world**—praying for peace
- ✘ **Immigrants**, especially those separated from families
- ✘ **UPC Officers:** elders, deacons, trustees
- ✘ Those who are suffering & marginalized
- ✘ Those struggling with mental illness

UPC Calendar

Submit corrections, additions, or deletions to the church office at (480) 966-6267 or upc@upctempe.org.

Check online for updates or to subscribe on your computer or device:
www.upctempe.org/calendar

October 2020

Fri, Oct 2

2:00 PM I-HELP, Quakers (FH, K)
 8:30 PM A. A. Meeting (Rm 7)

Sat, Oct 3

7:00 AM I-HELP Guests Depart (FH, K)

Sun, Oct 4

World Communion

Peace & Global Witness Offering

8:30 AM Children's Bible Time (Zoom-P)
 9:30 AM Worship Service (Zoom-U)
 11:00 AM Adult Christian Education (Zoom-U)
 3:00 PM Youth Group (Zoom-U)

Mon, Oct 5

8:30 PM A.A. Meeting (Rm 7)

Wed, Oct 7

9:00 AM *Lectio Divina* Bible Study (Zoom-U)
 4:00 PM Worship Planning Team (Zoom-U)
 4:30 PM Staff Meeting (Zoom-U)
 6:00 PM Social Hour With Pastor Eric (Zoom-U)
 7:00 PM Choir Practice (Zoom-P)
 7:30 PM UKIRK @ ASU (Zoom-U)

Thu, Oct 8

1:00 PM PW Mission Focus Hour (Zoom-U)
 7:00 PM MSJP (Zoom)

Fri, Oct 9

8:30 PM A. A. Meeting (Rm 7)

Sun, Oct 11

8:30 AM Children's Bible Time (Zoom-P)

9:30 AM Worship Service
 (www.upctempe.org/youtube)
 11:00 AM Adult Christian Education (Zoom-U)
 3:00 PM Youth Group (Zoom-U)

Mon, Oct 12

2:00 PM I-HELP, LDS (FH, K)
 8:30 PM A.A. Meeting (Rm 7)

Tue, Oct 13

7:00 AM I-HELP Guests Depart (FH, K)
 7:00 PM Worship Committee (Zoom P)
 7:00 PM Finance Committee (Zoom-U)

Wed, Oct 14

9:00 AM *Lectio Divina* Bible Study (Zoom-U)
 4:00 PM Worship Planning Team (Zoom-U)
 6:00 PM Social Hour With Pastor Eric (Zoom-U)
 7:00 PM Choir Practice (Zoom-P)
 7:30 PM UKIRK @ ASU (Zoom-U)

Thu, Oct 15

6:30 PM CI&O Committee (Zoom-P)
 7:00 PM PW Coordinating Team (Zoom-U)

Fri, Oct 16

2:00 PM I-HELP, UPC (FH,K)
 8:30 PM A. A. Meeting (Rm 7)

Sat, Oct 17

7:00 AM I-HELP Guests Depart(FH, K)

Sun, Oct 18

Children's Sabbath

8:30 AM Children's Bible Time (Zoom-P)
 9:30 AM Worship Service
 (www.upctempe.org/youtube)
 11:00 AM Adult Christian Education (Zoom-U)

3:00 PM Youth Group (Zoom-U)

Mon, Oct 19

8:30 PM A.A. Meeting (Rm 7)

Tue, Oct 20

7:00 PM Trustee Meeting (Zoom U)

Wed, Oct 21

9:00 AM *Lectio Divina* Bible Study (Zoom-U)
 1:00 PM PW Chinle Circle (Zoom-U)
 4:00 PM Worship Planning Team (Zoom-U)
 6:00 PM Social Hour With Pastor Eric (Zoom-U)
 7:00 PM Choir Practice (Zoom-P)
 7:30 PM UKIRK @ ASU (Zoom-U)

Fri, Oct 23

8:30 PM A. A. Meeting (Rm 7)

Sun, Oct 25

Reformation Sunday

8:30 AM Children's Bible Time (Zoom-P)
 9:30 AM Worship Service
 (www.upctempe.org/youtube)
 11:00 AM Adult Christian Education (Zoom-U)
 3:00 PM Youth Group (Zoom-U)
 6:30 PM Intergenerational Talent Show (Zoom-U)

Mon, Oct 26

2:00 PM I-HELP, Extra Assistance (FH, K)
 7:00 PM PW Horizons Bible Study (Zoom-U)
 8:30 PM A.A. Meeting (Rm 7)

Tue, Oct 27

7:00 PM Session Meeting (Zoom-U)

See CALENDAR, page 16

Location/Room References:

(CH)-Choir Room (CR)-Conference Room/Office (COR/Rm7)-Community Room (FH)-Fellowship Hall (HSR)-High School Room (MSR)-Middle School Room (K)-Fellowship Hall Kitchen (L)-Lounge (MR)-Meeting Room (N) Nursery (PO)-Pastor's Office (Rm#)-Room Number Indicated (S)-Sanctuary

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CALENDAR

Continued from page 15

Wed, Oct 28

- 9:00 AM Lectio Divina Bible Study
(Zoom-U)
- 4:00 PM Worship Planning Team
(Zoom-U)
- 6:00 PM Social Hour With Pastor Eric
(Zoom-U)
- 7:00 PM Choir Practice (Zoom-P)
- 7:30 PM UKIRK @ ASU (Zoom-U)

Fri, Oct 30

- 8:30 PM A. A. Meeting (Rm 7)

Get calendar updates at
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Quick Links

- **Sunday morning worship** at 9:30 a.m. (to attend via Zoom, register at www.upctempe.org/worship), followed by fellowship breakout rooms!
- **Get the Weekly Update Email:** Make sure you're in the loop with all the latest info! Sign up at: www.upctempe.org/email.
- **Days for Girls Mission:** For training and lending a hand contact Helen Griffin (helen.e.h.griffin@gmail.com)
- **Deacons:** Contact your neighborhood deacon if you have a particular need or just want to chat.