

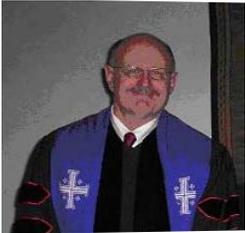


The Grapevine

CONNECTING THE CONGREGATIONS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF DETROIT

January 2013

2012 Year in Review – Presbytery of Detroit



by the Rev. Dr. Allen D. Timm, Executive Presbyter

As I look back at 2012 in the life of the presbytery, I asked the question, following Presbytery's mission statement, how did Presbytery help congregations grow stronger? How did the Presbytery strengthen congregations to be missional, pastoral, and prophetic?

To be missional – The Hands on Mission Workgroup gave congregations the opportunity to join other congregations in showing Christ's love to end hunger ("the great tomato give-a-way," gardening programs), promote health among urban residents, host inbound trips for congregations in other presbyteries, lead VBS, provide shelter, build homes through Habitat, tutor, and on and on. The Hunger Action Enabler assisted congregations to set up food banks and supplied the food. In world mission congregations heard where Christ is at work in the world through speakers in their congregations and the Month of Mission breakfast.

Congregations signed up through Mission Connection to be included in the email reports and requests for prayer from mission co-workers. Many congregations are now "sending" congregations – sending folks into mission either in

the surrounding cities or in the world.

The Presbytery's youth ministry assists congregations who only have a few youth to have a life changing ministry. Last year a diverse group gathered for the first annual Martin Luther King Day and engaged in discussion and service. The Youth Mission Blast hosted mission weeks for 50 youth from around the presbytery, and hosted inbound groups. Thirty youth from around the presbytery joined together for a mission trip to New Orleans, the area devastated by hurricane Katrina.

The Men's Ministry and Presbyterian Women gave congregations the opportunity to serve others through their service projects. The women host an ingathering each year, where supplies are collected for families. The Men collaborated with Focus Hope to help bring a Detroit neighborhood back to life by working in a park next to a Presbyterian retirement village, Oakton Manor.

A disappointment last year was that the Riverside Church, a newly chartered church, closed its doors. Plans are underway in other areas, including the West side of the presbytery, south of Howell, operating out of the Howell Nature and Conference Center. The Center is a great asset to the presbytery and its surrounding community. There was also a valiant effort in the Southwest area of Detroit, which is continuing to grow and serve

the Spanish speaking population.

To be pastoral – The Spiritual Formation ministry team sponsored The Presbyterian Pilgrimage, a short course in the Christian life, as well as retreats to care for and nurture pastors. The Pastors in Transition Group led workshops for new pastors. The Education Workgroup supported congregations as they looked for curriculum, and found VBS resources, not to mention the excellent resource center they offer the presbytery, which welcomes between 30 – 60 visitors each month, to find resources for education to care for members. The work of our standing committees for Candidates and Committee on Ministry also help congregations by being pastoral to their constituents. This helps prepare and place pastors as pastoral leaders in congregations.

To be prophetic – The Social Justice Ministry Team helped congregations be prophetic by promoting foster care, literacy, self development of people, All God's Children, multicultural ministries, and ending domestic violence. Highlights of the year included interfaith dialogues between a Jewish rabbi, a Palestinian Sharia Court Judge from Jerusalem, and Christians. They were held at First Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, a community center in Birmingham, and Wayne State University, and were attended by over 160 people.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

A dialogue about the events surrounding the death of Travon Martin was held at a Presbytery Assembly, which helped commissioners see how racial profiling affects behavior. The SJP also supported a Peace Camp at Fort Street Presbyterian Church to engage youth of different faiths in dialogue.

Meanwhile, the office and administrative staff supported these ministries and communicated what was going on. The staff serves by providing the foundation for meetings and ministries. Most congregations appreciate this and support per capita giving, but as of yet all the outstanding 2012 per capita has not been collected.

The only other thing to report is that while some congregations enjoyed growth in worship and vitality, the congregations as a whole lost members yet another year by 1500 members. At the

same time much work was done to offer workshops to help congregations grow in ministry to their neighborhood. For some congregations, looking outward is a challenge because they love being together. I had the privilege of studying with Dr. Gil Rendle the last three years, and he has shown how to help congregations become relevant to their neighbors. Dr. Rendle guided the Holy Conversations project which offers support to congregations who are willing to put effort into revitalizing their ministry. He asks three questions that every congregation needs to answer if it is to make disciples who will change the world. Who are we? What is our purpose? And Who is our neighbor?

Finally, I want to thank you for your support of the Presbytery. Over three hundred volunteers fill our ministry teams, committees, and work groups. Many congregations have fulfilled their per capita which is necessary to

run an effective office. Many congregations gave generously to provide mission support to run programs and training, help campus ministry, synod ministry, and a world-wide witness. And beyond all of this, most of the congregations have made a pledge to support the hosting of General Assembly in 2014. That effort will take many volunteers to offer hospitality to commissioners and observers. Committee chairs have been selected, and now committees are forming.

Praise be to God for the work of the Detroit Presbytery. I hope the work of the presbytery has helped congregations to grow stronger in their mission, pastoral care, and prophetic voice and action. I am honored to serve you and continue to look forward to our mutual work as we reach out to our neighbors in the Detroit metropolitan area, and show them the love of Jesus Christ.

Clergy Ordination Anniversaries

January

Bourlier, Ruthanne	5
Shinn, David	15

The Parish Paper

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Presbytery of Detroit

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
17575 Hubbell Ave, Detroit, MI 48235
313-345-6550
313-345-7250 (fax)
Info@detroitpresbytery.org
http://www.detroitpresbytery.org
http://www.PbyDetroit.org (for documents)
http://www.synodofthecovenant.org
http://www.pcusa.org

Staff

Executive Presbyter
The Rev. Dr. Allen D. Timm, ext. 203
Stated Clerk
The Rev. Edward H. Koster, ext. 201
Director of Outdoor Ministries
Richard Grant, 517-546-0249
Resource Center Director
Joanne Higgins, ext. 215
Hunger Action Coordinator
Artheilia Thompson, ext. 207
Executive Assistant
Beverly Knox, ext. 204
Office Manager
Sandra K. Jensen, ext. 220

Accounting Manager

Bev Auger, ext. 209
Office & Bookkeeping Clerk
Rhonda Barley, ext. 200

Consultants

Hands-on Mission
Mary Lloyd, 313-247-0792
Transformation of Congregations
The Rev. Estelle Aaron, 216-280-1338
Youth Hands-on Mission
Charon Barcone, 313-770-5822
Interfaith Ministries
The Rev. Wm Gepford, 313-933-4086

THE PARISH PAPER

IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

Coeditors: Herb Miller, Lyle E. Schaller, Cynthia Woolever - www.TheParishPaper.com

January 2013 - Volume 21, Number 1

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How to Avoid Pastor Burnout

Francis, a nurse, works in a neonatal intensive care unit. Caring for high-risk infants and dealing with their concerned parents makes her job extremely stressful. Yet she loves it and cannot imagine doing anything else. Although she is exhausted when her shift ends, she is also happy because she knows that she has made a difference for her patients and their families. How can she handle the high stress *and* experience high job satisfaction—at the same time?

What Causes Pastor Burnout?

Many people believe that experiencing high stress levels causes burnout and drives pastors away from ministry. In fact, most pastors can—and do—deal with high levels of stress. Unfortunately, a few pastors fail in their efforts. One in ten pastors considers leaving their church each year. But what about the other nine pastors? If pastors love what they do *and* experience high levels of satisfaction with ministry, then they can deal with a great amount of stress.

What can pastors do to increase their ministry satisfaction and reduce stress? What can church members do to help?

Ways to Increase Ministry Satisfaction

New research findings show how pastors can invest in their ministry to experience a higher level of satisfaction in their calling and vocation.¹

1. *Spend a larger share of time in ministry tasks that match ministry strengths.* For some pastors, time spent in sermon preparation, preaching, and worship leadership is highly rewarding. For others it might be visiting with prospective members or pastoral care for current members. Finding ways to spend more time on the joy-filled items is key to greater satisfaction in ministry.

2. *Achieve a sense of accomplishment in ministry goals.* Pastors want to feel like they are accomplishing important goals for the congregation and its ministries. Experiencing frustration and walls of resistance from

members stand between a pastor and the sense of a job well done. Pastors who feel like failures eventually look for something else to do where they can make a difference. It's important for pastors to set personal goals and to share these with their members so that successes can be seen, and celebrated, by all.

3. *Nurture a spiritual life.* In the midst of taking care of members and church responsibilities, pastors can neglect their own spiritual growth. Drawing from the spiritual well without replenishing leads to faith stagnation. The most satisfied pastors are also highly satisfied with their growth in faith.

4. *Seek quality relationships with lay leaders and members.* Pastors who invest in developing deep and trusting relationships with members also find higher satisfaction in ministry.

5. *Find support and resources from other clergy and the denomination.* Pastors with high levels of ministry satisfaction reach out to other clergy for new ideas, sermon and teaching resources, and support. Many highly satisfied pastors also cite their denomination as a critical partner in their long-term ministry effectiveness.



BY MATCHING MY MINISTRY STRENGTHS WITH MINISTRY TASKS, I'VE AVOIDED EMCEEING THE "LOUD FOR THE LORD" YOUTH GROUP EVENT.

6. *Pursue continuing education.* Effective clergy are life-long learners. New ideas for education, worship, ministry, and evangelism come from opportunities beyond the congregation. These include personal study of new books and materials, attending conferences and talks, and staying engaged with local educational institutions.

Churches that provide for their pastor are demonstrating care and respect for them and their ministry. Pastors who express high satisfaction with ministry also report that they receive adequate salaries, housing allowances, healthcare benefits, and pensions to sustain them and their families.

Ways to Reduce Ministry Stress

Reducing stress is the other half of the equation for maximizing long-term health and well-being in ministry. Pastors can reduce stress if they:

1. *Participate in a clergy peer group.* A national study of participation in these groups reveals that pastors benefit in multiple ways. They gain from a community that engages in self-directed learning—a level of support and accountability not found elsewhere. Pastors who participate are more likely to promote a church “culture of involvement” that actively assimilates newcomers and promotes member leadership.²
2. *Spend time with family and friends.* Many pastors feel that people in the congregation make too many demands, leaving them little time for a private life. Pastors who are committed to finding support from family and friends, creating good memories, and engaging in nonmember friendships reduce stress.
3. *Get regular physical exercise.* Good physical health and strong emotional health go hand-in-hand. Pastors can combine activities with family/friend time.
4. *Establish boundaries between ministry and personal time.* Set aside specific periods each week to unplug electronically (emails and phone use) and spend this time with family or doing non-work-related activities.
5. *Take a day off each week.* Job stress is lower for pastors who regularly take a day off each week.
6. *Pursue a relaxing hobby or interest.* The options are infinite, but leisure interests such as fishing, painting, or cooking keep pastors from becoming one-dimensional and offer another way to relate to members.

Congregations can assist in stress reduction by offering a pastoral Sabbath for sustained rest, renewal, or extended study. The average Sabbath period is three months. Members should also understand how allowing for the above stress-reducing activities will enable their pastor to become *more* engaged with the congregation.

Who Is Responsible for Clergy Care?

When the minister experiences constant negativity from a small group of members, the pastor feels psychologically pressured to leave the ministry position. About one in four pastors will experience this type of forced termination from their congregation at some point during their ministry service.³ Those who have been terminated are more likely to experience burn-out, depression, and physical health problems.

Consider involving the pastor and congregation in a discussion based on the following group exercise.

- Ask the pastor to look through the two lists above. First, ask the pastor to circle the number of each item that he or she believes they can *control* (the pastor exercises maximum responsibility and control over the outcome). Second, have the pastor underline words or phrases in the descriptions where the pastor believes he or she can *influence* the outcome.
- Ask the church board or a small group of members to review the two lists in the same way—circling the number of each item that they believe members’ can *control* and underlining words or phrases in the descriptions where members’ believe they can *influence* the outcome.
- Ask the pastor and members to compare their responses. Which factors are the pastor’s responsibility, the congregation’s responsibility, or the responsibility of both? How can the pastor and members be more proactive in taking responsibility for the long-term ministry effectiveness of pastoral leadership?

The Bottom Line

Pastors need ongoing support from the congregation, their peers, their denomination, and seminaries. Congregations that adequately support clergy receive far more in return. Reasonable expectations from members assist pastors in time management and appropriate self-care. How pastors spend their time reflects their priorities. If good communication and a common vision exist, the pastor’s time investments will mirror the church’s priorities.

1. Cynthia Woolever and Deborah Bruce, *Leadership That Fits Your Church: What Kind of Pastor for What Kind of Congregation* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2012).

2. “A Study of the Effects of Participation in Pastoral Leader Peer Groups,” Austin Presbyterian Seminary, 2010, http://faithandleadership.com/programs/spe/pdf/SPE_report_2010.pdf.

3. M. N. Tanner, A.M. Zvonkovic, and C. Adams, “Forced Termination of American Clergy: Its Effects and Connection to Negative Well-Being,” *Review of Religion Research* (2012) 54:1–17.

Presbytery of Detroit Calendar of Events

To have your Churches event posted please send the information to sandy@detroitpresbytery.org.

January 2013	
22	Presbytery Meeting at Ann Arbor, First, 1432 Washtenaw Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48104 734-662-4466. Installation of Moderator and Vice Moderator.
24-26	Calvin Symposium on Worship, Grand Rapids, MI "Sermon in the Mount" endorsed by and scholarships available through the Congregational Life Ministry Team. For more information contact Bob Szwed, Chair of Congregational Life at bszwed@yahoo.com .
26	Clerk Training 9:00am-11:00am at Detroit Westminster. We will discuss Session responsibilities under the Directory of Worship
30	TRAINING in Prepare/Enrich being offered at Samaritan Counseling Center of SE Michigan, Nardin Park United Methodist Church, Farmington Hills. For more info and registration go to www.samaritancounselingmichigan.com
February 2013	
2	Leadership Training Day at Dearborn, The First, 600 N. Brady, Dearborn, MI 48124. Brochure and Registration information coming soon. Click here for flyer
2	Grosse Pointe Memorial. 16 Lakeshore Dr., Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48230 is hosting a workshop <i>Love In Disguise</i> at the church 9:30 am - Noon. Click here for flyer
5	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
9-10	Shane Claiborne to speak at Royal Oak, First 529 Hendrie Blvd., Royal Oak, MI 48067. Click here for information
10-12	Pastors in Transition meeting at DeWitt. Click here for brochure
10-12	A Retreat with Rev. John Bell at the Transformations Spirituality Center in Kalamazoo. Click here for more information
23	Michigan Black Presbyterian Caucus fundraiser "Postcards" by William Costanza at the Detroit Repertory Theater, 13108 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. Click here for ticket information
26	Presbytery Meeting at Farmington, First, 26165 Farmington Rd., Farmington Hills, MI 48334 248-474-6170. Mission Commitment Forms to be returned.
March 2013	
1-3	Alma Youth Mix. Registration packets are available at http://www.presbylh.org/alma-youth-mix/ or to volunteer to help with the Mix, please contact Cher Childs, the chair of the Youth Mix Design team at cchilds302@aol.com
5	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
9	PWPD retreat "Doors of Grace: Opening Our Hearts to God's Presence" to be held at First Presbyterian Church, 1669 W. Maple Rd., Birmingham, MI 48009. Click here for more information
10	Daylight Savings Time Begins - set clocks ahead one hour
April 2013	
2	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
23	Presbytery Meeting at TBD
May 2013	
7	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
27	Presbytery Office Closed in observance of Memorial Day

June 2013	
4	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
4	TRAINING in Prepare/Enrich being offered at Samaritan Counseling Center of SE Michigan, Nardin Park United Methodist Church, Farmington Hills. For more info and registration go to www.samaritancounselingmichigan.com
25	Presbytery Meeting at TBD
30-July 5	Covenant Gathering 2013 "Seasons of Faith" at Michindoh Conference Center, Hillsdale, MI. More information on the Covenant Gathering web site http://www.covenantgathering.com
July 2013	
2	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
4	Presbytery Office closed in observance of Independence Day
16-20	Presbyterian Youth Triennium 2013 at Purdue University. Registration information and forms at www.presbyterianyouthtriennium.org If you have questions please contact Matt Nickel at mnickel@fpcro.org
August 2013	
6	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
27	Presbytery Meeting at TBD
September 2013	
2	Presbytery Office closed in observance of Labor day
3	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
21	Warren, Celtic Cross Fall "Holiday Craft Show" from 10-4 and table rentals will be \$25. For further information please contact Celtic Cross Presbyterian Church, 11451 E. Ten Mile Rd., Warren, MI 48089 or call 586 757 7832.
October 2013	
1	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
22	Presbytery Meeting at TBD
26	Month of Mission Breakfast
November 2013	
3	Daylight Savings Time Ends - set clocks back one hour
5	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
26	Presbytery Meeting at TBD
28	Presbytery Office closed for Thanksgiving Day
December 2013	
3	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
14	Men's Advent Communion Breakfast
24-25	Presbytery Office Closed for Christmas Holiday
31-Jan 1	Presbytery Office Closed for New Year Holiday
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