



ALBANY PRESBYTERY E-NEWS

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What Happened at the November Presbytery Meeting?

By Rev. Cass Shaw, General Presbyter

The Korean Church hosted the meeting, and once again lived up to their reputation for generous and gracious hospitality and wonderful food. For the first time presbyters experienced "Open Space" conversations, generated by anyone who wanted to suggest a topic. For an hour commissioners participated in any of several conversations, including Occupy Wall Street, Reaching Out to Young Adults, Ecumenism and Interfaith Issues, Shared Leadership for Congregations,

The West End congregation has made a bold move. The Session received permission to sell their building and lease back a portion of it for the next two years while they consider how to invest in their Albany neighborhood in new and more dynamic ways. They are the first congregation to take the risk and embrace a very new way of being, not saddled with the upkeep of a building that is way too big for their current needs. Several elders spoke with some sadness, but plenty of hope and excitement as well as they look toward the future.

The Oakwood congregation, in concert with the Trustees, asked that the life of the congregation be extended for another year in order to put in place a non-profit board which can continue to oversee a variety of ministries and groups who have found a home at the Oakwood church. An Administrative Commission will be appointed to take on the responsibilities of the Session and work on setting up the future board. This congregation has shown a great deal of creativity and courage as they work to establish a legacy that will allow them to "stay on the corner" long after they cease to be a congregation.

The Committee on Ministry proposed that Albany Presbytery concur with an overture coming out of Mid-Kentucky Presbytery on divesting from for profit health insurance companies. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) and the Commissioned Lay Pastor (CLP) Task Force brought a joint proposal for making the CLP process more flexible and putting it under the care of CPM. The Presbytery also offered special recognition to Norma Brown, who has been serving as the CLP Dean since the current program's inception. The Trustees and the Committee on Ministry brought a joint proposal for creating a new fund through which loans and grants will be made to congregations for capital improvements. This fund will be established through the sale of property and receipt of assets when churches close.

Lois Hessberg, an elder from the Delmar congregation, was elected Vice Moderator. She and Paul Randall were installed as Vice Moderator and Moderator of the Presbytery during worship. The presbyters voted to go to Silver Bay in June rather than September, so the dates for Presbytery meetings in 2012 are now set. They are:

**Saturday - 1/28/12, Tuesday - 4/17/12, Friday & Saturday - 6/8/12 & 6/9/12
Tuesday - 9/18/12, Saturday - 11/17/12**

NEWS AND EVENTS

Caring for God's Creation During Advent— A Study Guide

Take a look at our meaningful and easy to use advent study guide, which guides you in lighting a candle and changing a light bulb each week.

<http://www.newyorkipnl.org/2011/11/adventchristmas-study-guide-available-now/>



A Note from Rev. Donna Elia, Pastor of Hoosick Falls Church and Executive Director of TAUM.

We have a long-standing collaboration with Unity House to give priority to women and dependent children fleeing family violence when they leave Unity House's DV shelter and are establishing a new home. Our furniture program furnishes the home, and they receive ongoing case management and support to start over. The Emergency Shelter grant was cut state-wide by more than 1/2, so when we wrote a collaborative grant this year, we were very concerned. However, on the strength of our collaborative program (and good writing) we were rated #1 among all applications in the state! That will mean \$20,000 next year for TAUM's furniture program. Given that we annually give away about \$250,000 worth of furniture, that's a worthwhile investment.

Thank you to the Presbytery for going the extra mile for TAUM. I appreciate it a great deal.

Donna Elia, TAUM Executive Director



The Second Five Minutes: Introduction to Preaching

Rev. Dr. Bill Levering

Who in your congregation has the gifts for leading worship? Who can help others hear the gospel message in Bible studies and small group sessions? These are the people who can become helpmates and leaders in your congregation! Encourage the development of their gifts, and strengthen their confidence in sharing with others - Send them to THE SECOND FIVE MINUTES: INTRO TO PREACHING.

A core course in our Lay Theological Education Program, but open to all.

When: Saturdays, Jan. 14 & 28,
Feb. 11 & 25, 9am - 3pm

Where: First Reformed Church in
Schenectady
8 N. Church St.
Schenectady, NY 12305

Registration deadline: December 29, 2011

Please call CRTC at (518)462-2470

Happy Family Holidays!

Dealing with stress when family comes home

By David Olsen, PhD

Executive Director of Samaritan Counseling Center

The problem with the holidays word"...Family! How do we season in the midst of the ings? What makes it so ments and television commer-scenes full of warmth, love, often quite different. Family



The holidays bring up many as well as grief, anger, frustra-solved issues. While there is being together for the holi-for those get-togethers to be-wonder so many popular holiday movies like *The Family Stone* or *Four Christmases* are both funny and poignant, and sometimes hit too close to home.

for many people is the "F-enjoy and savor the holiday complications of family gather-stressful? While advertise-cials picture wonderful family and good cheer, the reality is holidays can be confusing!

emotions: excitement and joy, tion and any number of unre-often wonderful anticipation of days, there is also the potential come irritating, or worse. No

While getting ready for the holidays involves shopping, decorating, and meal preparation, it also means getting ready for those predictable family interactions. Consider several potential holiday party crashers: the "button pusher", unresolved hurts, and the feeling of being a stranger. All of these can make the holidays difficult.

Every family has the **button pusher**. That would be the person who has an ingenious ability to push your (or your relatives') buttons. They may bring up an extreme political or religious issue and before long you are "hooked" into an argument. Or they know too well about your sensitive subjects and know just the right comment to turn the knife. Within a short time, it is easy to feel like you are fifteen years old. In the movie *Four Christmases*, Vince Vaughn and Reese Witherspoon lie to their families that they do charity work to avoid those familiar painful family interactions. And when they do visit their families, each painfully have their "buttons pushed" by family members who know exactly how to get them going. While we laughed at the antics of this movie, it also hits close to home. Many struggle with a parent or sibling who knows just how to hit a raw nerve. Suddenly the pleasant holiday meal ends in heartburn.

A second familiar holiday problem is **unresolved hurts**. Some people dread the holidays for this reason. Consider the person who grew up with alcoholism and the drama that would result from too much drinking. They came to dread the holidays, and see them as simply something to get through. These past images are stored deep inside and then reactivated during the holidays, often resulting in depression, anxiety, and dread. This gets even more complicated with our culture's presentation of what the holidays should be. Others may not have had to deal with alcoholism or abuse, but may have grown up feeling unloved or invalidated. They often hope that *this time* they will get the gift for which they have always longed: unconditional love, validation, or an apology. As a result they are usually disappointed, and even more hurt than before.

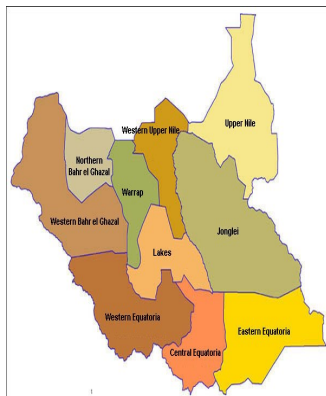
Finally, others have a different problem when they return home: they **feel like strangers**. While "home" is a word that should bring to mind warmth and security, and the phrase "home for the holidays" should bring to mind wonderful images; that is often far from the case. While there may be little

conflict, and things may go smoothly, they are left with the uneasy feeling that they are with strangers. They do not feel seen, or understood, and might even feel that their family members would not be the people they would pick as friends. They may feel like they have to work to get through the holidays. Since being seen and known is a profound human need, when it is not experienced with family the result can be painful.

While these three issues are very complicated, holidays can be more meaningful and less painful if you have a plan. There are very few surprises with family. If you can predict what the button pusher will do, you can change the interaction by not taking the bait and offering a more creative solution. In the same way, understanding painful history and how it gets reactivated during the holidays can be helpful in getting prepared. And if you do not typically feel understood or seen, lower your expectations for family visits. Bring your spouse or a close friend home with you so that you have someone that you do feel connected with even if the rest of the time is awkward.

Holidays, while not easy, are an opportunity for growth even in the midst of difficult family interactions. When we are successful in changing patterns, in shifting interactions and even rebuilding relationships, holidays can take on new meanings. Consider setting clear goals for handling the holidays differently this season, and give yourself the gift of growth!

SYNOD ASSEMBLY APPROVES COMMISSIONER RESOLUTION ON TO SUPPORT PCUSA EFFORTS IN SOUTH SUDAN TOWARD A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EDUCATIONAL MEANS IN SOLIDARITY WITH THEIR HOPE FOR A GLOBAL FUTURE



During the Synod Assembly meeting on October 20-22, 2011, at the Stony Point Conference Center, a Commissioner Resolution to support PCUSA efforts in South Sudan toward a just and sustainable human development through educational means in solidarity with their hope for a global future was presented requesting the Synod of the Northeast stand in solidarity with the South Sudanese as they embark on constructing their new country and recognize the uniquely contingent window of opportunity they possess to develop concurrently their strong Christian and Presbyterian history with civic responsibility.

The resolution is attached as a bulletin insert and can also be downloaded from the Synod's website at <http://www.synodne.org/mediagallery/album.php?aid=178>.

If you would like to subscribe to the E-news and/or the Prayer List, please send your email address to: info@albanypresbytery.org or give it to your pastor to relay to the Albany Presbytery office. If you would like to unsubscribe, then please do the same.

We welcome articles on matters affecting the whole presbytery from all who wish to submit them as we appreciate different perspectives that may influence our life together. Please send your articles in a Microsoft Word document to info@albanypresbytery.org



Please mark your calendars!!

Shane Claiborne will be here June 22 & June 23, 2012 to speak on:
A Call to the Simple Way of Radical Christianity (Day1 & Day2) from 9-4pm.
 Please visit the CRTC website at: <http://www.capitalrtc.org/main/index.php>

Or for more information

call CRTC at (518)462-2470

Albany Presbytery Office Supply Program

Superior Business Products is a local employee-owned company that has been serving the office products needs of local companies for over 27 years. The presbytery has an ongoing relationship with SBP which may benefit your congregation. Your congregation can place orders online, by phone or fax and receive your orders next day with no minimum order levels or shipping charges.

Their prices are consistently lower than their competitors and they would like to offer you a custom program that will fit the needs of all congregations within Albany Presbytery. Below is what they would like to offer Albany Presbytery Congregations:

The ability to do business with a **LOCALLY** owned company

Great everyday LOW prices on all your basic office supplies such as:

ITEM DESCRIPTION	ITEM NO.	SUPERIOR PRICE
COPY PAPER,8.5X11, 96BR,20LB	SPZ-EC851196A	\$31.95/CASE
COLORED COPY PAPER,8.5X11,BLUE <i>*variety of colors available</i>	SPR-05121	\$5.29/REAM

FREE Next Day Delivery with NO minimum purchase

FREE Same Day Emergency Delivery (Capital Region Only)

Cost Containment Catalog which will allow you to receive our BEST pricing on all our office supplies

Price lock Guarantees

MVP List- custom contract exclusively for Albany Presbytery

5% additional discount on all orders over \$50.00 when placed online-USE CODE SSA5

Special monthly promotions including free mail-in rebate offers

Toner Recycling Program-We dispose of your toners in the proper manner.

Let us be your "Green" conscience

Tech Support Services

Quarterly Usage reviews

HP Purchase Edge Program

Dedicated Inside Sales Rep

Return Policy: Items for return must be in their original packaging in resalable condition and returned within 3 days of delivery in order to receive full credit. Any and all items returned for credit must be approved for credit upon their return to Superior. Please contact either Lynn Migliore at lmigliore@superiorbponline.com or

Steve Sabatino at ssabatino@superiorbponline.com for more information