

**PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN  
NORTH CAROLINA  
INFORMATION PACKET  
September 2009**

Please distribute the enclosed information to the appropriate members of your congregation. To discontinue receiving this mailing, please notify the Presbytery Office by e-mail ([rbuchanan@presbyterywnc.org](mailto:rbuchanan@presbyterywnc.org)), fax (828/437-8655), phone (828/438-4217) or mail (114 Silver Creek Road, Morganton, NC 28655).

*PRAYER CALENDAR*

- September 2009 ~ October 2009
- Prayer Concerns

*GENERAL PRESBYTER*

- Message from the General Presbyter

*STATED CLERK*

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- Dates for *YOUR* Church Calendar
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*YOUTH*

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- Senior High Youth Rally
- Low Cost/No Cost Ideas for Youth Leaders!
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*OUTREACH DIVISION*

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Hunger Fasts; Peacemaking Offering; Upcoming Conferences
- Regional Multicultural Conference
- Letter from Barbara Nagy ~ July 10, 2009
- Malawi Mission Trip Report
- Letter from Rebecca Young ~ Indonesia ~ June 30, 2009
- Letter from Rebecca Young ~ Indonesia ~ July 20, 2009
- Rachel Brown ~ Young Adult Volunteer in Kenya
- Letter from Frank & Nancy Dimmock ~ Lesotho ~ June 17, 2009
- News from Amanda Craft ~ Guatemala ~ July 1, 2009

*MISCELLANEOUS*

- The Church Lives On! (Bethel Presbyterian Church)

**82nd Stated Meeting of Presbytery of  
Western North Carolina  
Friday & Saturday October 23-24, 2009**

**Lake Junaluska Conference Center  
Lake Junaluska, NC**

**Registration Deadline: Friday, September 18, 2009**  
*Everyone must register prior to the meeting!*

*FOR YOUR INFORMATION*

**Presbytery Staff E-mail Addresses:**

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# The Presbytery of Western North Carolina

114 Silver Creek Road, Morganton, NC 28655 Phone: (828)438-4217 Fax: (828)437-8655

**TO:** *Churches of the Presbytery of WNC*  
**FROM:** *Bobbi White, General Presbyter*  
**DATE:** *August 20, 2009*  
**SUBJECT:** *Prayer Calendar for September and October*

*Many of our churches include the following paragraphs in their bulletins and newsletters each week. This encourages their members to pray for these congregations on the designated Sundays.*

*\* Consider sending the churches a card telling them they were held up in prayer. \**

**September 6<sup>th</sup> - Iglesia Presbiteriana Emanuel Fellowship (613 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, NE, Hickory, NC 28601)**  
*Pray for our congregation as we look for future direction of the church. Pray for the "Friday Night Bible Study." Our pastor, Oscar Garcia, returned to Mexico. The church is without a pastor and without a good prospect for a replacement. The members are going as a group to visit other English speaking Presbyterian churches in the area. We have a task force working with the Presbytery on future options. Pray that we will see God's vision for the future. We ask for prayers for Spanish speaking persons to help with Bible study and worship, and for the development of our own leadership.*

**September 13<sup>th</sup> - Ironton (P.O. Box 129, Iron Station, NC 28080)**  
*Give thanks for the way the members care for each other and the community. Give thanks for their loving acceptance of people and for the abundant ministry offered by a small number of people. Pray that God will continue to walk with them in their ministry. Pray for the pastor, David Lytle.*

**September 20<sup>th</sup> - Jack's Creek (P.O. Box 1073, Burnsville, NC 28714)**  
*Give thanks for the members and ministry of Jack's Creek Presbyterian Church. Pray that God will continue to work in their midst, bless them and provide direction to them for the future. Pray for the Session, and Pete Peterson, pastor.*

**September 27<sup>th</sup> - John Knox (610 Charles Road, Shelby, NC 28152)**  
*Give thanks for their ministry and outreach to those less fortunate. Pray for spiritual growth and a desire to reach out to others. Give thanks for and pray for their fifth Sunday gathering with the other local Presbyterian Churches. Pray for Dick Hood, pastor.*

**October 4<sup>th</sup> - Kenilworth (123 Kenilworth Road, Asheville, NC 28803)**

[kenilworthpc@hotmail.com](mailto:kenilworthpc@hotmail.com)

*Please pray that Kenilworth Presbyterian Church will follow Christ's call to love God and love our neighbor in all that we do as a church. Pray for our pastor, Allen Smith.*

**October 11<sup>th</sup> - Kings Mountain First (P.O. Box 1188, Kings Mountain, NC 28086)**

[fpc@carolina.rr.com](mailto:fpc@carolina.rr.com)

*We are excited at First Presbyterian as we sense God moving among us. Please pray that we would keep our hearts and minds open as we go through the Acts 16:5 Initiative. We ask that you pray for God to continue to bless our membership, Session and staff, with wisdom and focus, as we seek to be faithful stewards and witnesses for the Kingdom. Pray for our pastor, Lee Thomas.*

**October 18<sup>th</sup> - Korean Presbyterian Church of Asheville (107 Firwood Court, Asheville, NC 28804)**

[dkwin@hotmail.com](mailto:dkwin@hotmail.com)

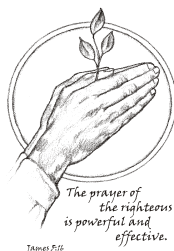
*Give thanks for the positive way God is at work in our midst. Pray we will reach out with the good News of the Gospel to those not in a church and nurture our children in the faith. Please ask that God will give wisdom and guidance to the Session and our pastor, Rev. Dong Uk Kang.*

**October 25<sup>th</sup> - Lenoir First (1002 Kirkwood Avenue, NW, Lenoir, NC 28645)**

[bootsie@fpclenoir.org](mailto:bootsie@fpclenoir.org)

*Lenoir First Presbyterian rejoices in the work in our community of God our Father, His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the one and only way to salvation, and God's Holy Spirit. God has, and is, calling us to join Him in many ministries near and far. In 2009, one of our seminarians accepted a call to Peachtree Presbyterian and God blessed us to call another seminarian from our pews, who begins his studies this fall. God is providing new members, new babies, and countless opportunities to share the Good News that is Jesus Christ. Pray for our members, who are our ministers and our pastor, Rob Hinman.*

**MISSION PRAYER CALENDAR:** *Even as we pray each week for specific churches in our Presbytery, we can also remember our missionaries and mission activities as a reminder that our family extends into all the world.*



# Joys & Prayer Concerns.....



August 27, 2009

- **Jennifer Richey**, administrative assistant at Black Mountain Presbyterian Church, health concerns.
- **Rev. Joel Cherry**, *retired pastor*, in hospital with pneumonia. Congratulations ~ Joel and Maxine are have a new grandbaby.
- **Pia Jones**, *wife of Sam Jones and daughter-in-law of Wilma Jones*; health concerns.
- **Linda Ligon**, *wife of the Rev. Wendell Ligon*, recovering from surgery.
- **Elli Buchanan**, *daughter of the Revs. Aimee and Bill Buchanan*, recovering from Lyme's disease.
- Congratulations to the **Rev. Michael Bailey and his wife, Laura**, on the birth of their daughter, Katherine Mae. Katherine was born on July 26, weighing 6 lbs. 14 oz. *Michael is the pastor Morganton, First.*
- **Wanda Cook**, *wife of Rev. Tom Cook*, health concerns.
- **Tommy & Cindy Williams**, *Tommy serves on the Personnel Committee and they are members at Newland Presbyterian Church.* Health concerns with their family.
- **Thelma Cumbie**, *member of Strategic Goals Committee and Let's Celebrate Task Force*, recovering from a stroke and broken ankle. (*Northeast Atlanta Health & Rehab, Atlanta, GA*)
- **Rev. Katherine Parker**, health concerns.
- **Rev. Bob Abel**, *pastor at Franklin, First*, health concerns.
- **Susie Rabuck and Justin Rabuck**, *wife and son of the Rev. Jay Rabuck*, health concerns.
- **The Rev. Ted Grant**, *pastor at Sherrill's Ford Presbyterian Church*, health concerns.
- **The Rev. Tony Baker**, *pastor at First Presbyterian Church, Dallas*, at home, continuing to recover following having a stroke on Friday, May 15, 2009.
- **Rev. J. Julius Scott, Jr.**, *retired pastor*, health concerns.
- **Rev. Sam Hope**, *retired pastor*, health concerns.

## PRAY FOR OUR



Please pray for the safety and protection our Service Men and Women who are serving both at home and abroad.

## ORDINATION/INSTALLATION SERVICE

- **Daria L. Ragan** was ordained and installed as associate pastor at the Belmont First Presbyterian Church in Belmont on August 9, 2009.
- **Alexander Robert McLean** was installed as pastor at the First Presbyterian Church of Swannanoa in Swannanoa on August 9, 2009.
- **Michael "Chris" Wingard** is to be installed as pastor at the Riceville Presbyterian Church in Asheville, on September 20, 2009 at 5:00 p.m.

## MISSIONARIES

- ▶ Barbara Nagy, as she continues her work at Nhkoma Hospital. Barbara and the girls have returned to the states for the coming school year. The adoption of Happy is final.
- ▶ Becca Young, as she continues her ministry in Indonesia.
- ▶ Frank and Nancy Dimmock and their family, who are in Lesotho. During the month of August, the Dimmocks will be in Atlanta. When Nancy and the children return to Lesotho at the end of August, Frank will remain in the states to do interpretation for 3 months.

- ▶ Rachel Brown, Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) from Mills River Presbyterian Church. Returning to North Carolina for the month of August and then moving to Seattle, WA the end of August.
- ▶ Virginia Gartrell, Mission Haven in Decatur, GA.
- ▶ Amanda Craft, Mission Co-Worker in Guatemala, Facilitator of the Presbyterian Women of Guatemala Program. ([amanda.craft@pcusa.org](mailto:amanda.craft@pcusa.org)) Welcome to the new addition to her family, a little boy, Ethan Alejandro Chan Craft. He arrived on June 29<sup>th</sup>, 20 days early, weighing 6 lbs. 6 oz.

*All prayer requests will be listed for 4 weeks. If you would like to add to the list, change a listing, or keep a request for a longer period of time, please call 828/438-4217, ext. 13 or send an e-mail to [rbuchanan@presbyterywnc.org](mailto:rbuchanan@presbyterywnc.org).*

## MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL PRESBYTER

August 2009

“THEY TAUGHT ME ABOUT JESUS AND JESUS BECAME THE CENTER OF MY LIFE”

Two Sundays ago, I was at two very different events, the closing of a church and the ordination of a new pastor. In both circumstances, I kept hearing testimonies about how God used the witness of individual people and the church to lead people to Christ and help them grow in faith. Faithful servants were witnesses to the love and grace of Christ. They were instruments in lives being transformed by the Holy Spirit. That was the theme.

I attended the celebration of Bethel Presbyterian Church and their 175 years of witness in that community. This was also the closing service for that church. I should have come away sad, and I did. However, I came away uplifted by the stories told by one after another person describing the impact that the Bethel Church and its members have had on their life. One person sang a song about “the little church in the mountains that taught me how to live and taught me about Jesus Christ, who is the center of my life.” I heard over and over stories of those whose lives had been transformed by people whose words and deeds were a witness of Christ’s love. They spoke of Mr. This and Ms. That who helped me when I was a kid, a young adult or an adult.

Later that day at the ordination and installation of Daria Raga at the Belmont First Presbyterian Church, I heard testimony after testimony telling how the Holy Spirit works though people in our lives. Daria described how people had gently guided her into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. She also described how her Christian brothers and sisters had supported her in her journey of faith and call to be a Minister of the Word and Sacrament. At the same time, I heard how Daria’s faith and witness had helped others grow in faith.

Last week, I attended the Malawi Mission Network meeting with others from churches and presbyteries working in Malawi. During the network’s meeting, Dr. Barbara Nagy described her work and how things at the hospital were much improved over several years ago. Many of these positive changes happened due to the work of Barbara and the Malawian staff. I will admit to pride as I knew the changes that were brought about because of the efforts and support of the churches in this Presbytery. Barbara talked about how infant mortality had been reduced by 75% at the hospital. The hospital, under Barbara’s leadership, had adopted protocols and additional training that could be duplicated in other hospitals. Barbara is working to help teach these protocols to other hospitals, so that infant mortality can be reduced throughout Malawi. Wow! That is the working of the Spirit.

Yet, I also heard testimonies of how people in Malawi had helped people from the USA grow in faith. I heard from the General Secretary of their Synod of nearly a million people on how relationships with people in this country were a spiritual encourager to the people in Malawi. Our joint witness was used by Christ to strengthen people in their faith and lives.

God’s Spirit works in our world in many ways and through many Christian brothers and sisters. We are a testimony to Christ’s grace and may never know if what we say and do will have an impact on the lives of others. As we grow in our own faith and relationship to Jesus Christ, let us share how others have had a positive impact on our lives and let the Spirit work through us. Let us also open our eyes to see God’s transforming hand in our midst.

Peace,



Bobbi White  
General Presbyter



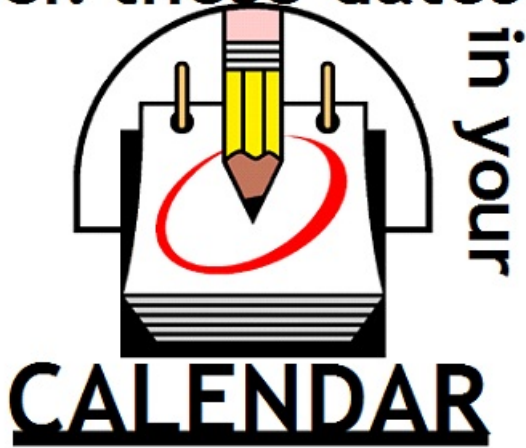
**The Presbytery of  
Western North Carolina  
is proud to announce that  
Elder William A. (Bert) Sigmon  
has been elected its  
Stated Clerk,  
effective August 1, 2009.**

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

**Cell Phone: 828/261-6168**

**E-Mail: [bertsigmon@hotmail.com](mailto:bertsigmon@hotmail.com)**

# Pencil these dates



# DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR

## SEPTEMBER 2009

September 7, 2009	Presbytery Office Closed ~ Labor Day	
September 12, 2009	Acts 16:5 Initiative Meeting for Pastors & Church Teams	Mt. Home Baptist Church
September 13, 2009	Senior High Rally	Upper Anderson, Montreat
September 13-19, 2009	Christian Education Week	
September 19, 2009	Presbyterian Women's Gathering	Sylva, First
September 21, 2009	International Day of Peace	
September 22, 2009	Native American Day	
September 26, 2009	Presbyterian Women's Gathering	Union Presbyterian
September 27, 2009	Evangelism Sunday	

## OCTOBER 2009

October 2, 2009	Deadline for Submission of Reports for October 23-24, 2009 Presbytery Meeting	
October 4, 2009	World Communion Sunday/Peacemaking Offering	
October 11, 2009	Presbyterian HIV/AIDS Awareness Sunday	
October 16, 2009	World Food Day	
October 18, 2009	Children's Sabbath	
October 23-24, 2009	82 <sup>nd</sup> Stated Meeting of Presbytery	Lake Junaluska Conf. Ctr.
October 25, 2009	Reformation Sunday	

## **NOVEMBER 2009**

November 6, 2009	World Community Day	
November 13-15, 2009	Middle School Retreat	Camp Grier, Old Fort, NC
November 15, 2009	Caregiver Sunday	
November 21, 2009	Church Youth Day 2009	Presbyterian College
November 26-27, 2009	Presbytery Office Closed ~ Thanksgiving	

## **DECEMBER 2009**

December 10, 2009	Human Rights Day	
December 20, 2009	Christmas Joy Offering	
December 23-25, 2009	Presbytery Office Closed ~ Christmas	



## Presbytery Meeting

**PRESBYTERY OF  
WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA  
EIGHTY-SECOND STATED MEETING  
OCTOBER 23-24, 2009**

**TWO DAY MEETING  
LAKE JUNALUSKA ASSEMBLY  
LAKE JUNALUSKA, NC**

**PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED FOR EVERYONE  
PLANNING TO ATTEND**

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2009**

**(Phone, Fax, or E-mail registrations will not be accepted.)**

### **RESERVATION INFORMATION: (80 Rooms reserved at LAMBUTH)**

Rates are based on the number of people occupying a room. Rooms have two double beds, except for handicapped rooms, which have two twin beds. **All rates include meal plan.** (Meals include: Friday Lunch, Friday Dinner and Saturday Breakfast. Everyone lodging must pay for the 3 meal plan.)

Single Occupancy: \$131.00 (1 person total ;  
includes 3 meals)

Double Occupancy: \$174.00 (2 persons total;  
\$87 per person; includes 3 meals per  
person)

Triple Occupancy: \$210.00 (3 persons total;  
\$70.00 per person; includes 3 meals per  
person)

Quadruple Occupancy: \$260.00 (4 persons  
total: \$65.00 per person; includes 3 meals  
per person)

### **MEALS ONLY (NO LODGING):**

Breakfast: \$ 9.00 per person

Lunch: \$11.00 per person

Dinner: \$13.00 per person

### **SERVING TIMES:**

7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

The **ONLY** meals that the Presbytery has requested are **FRIDAY LUNCH, FRIDAY DINNER and SATURDAY BREAKFAST.** If meals other than these are required, please indicate the day and meal on the special request line of the registration form attached. **ALL MEALS MUST BE RESERVED PRIOR TO PRESBYTERY MEETING!!**

**MAIL REGISTRATION, ALONG WITH CHECK, TO:  
PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA  
114 SILVER CREEK ROAD  
MORGANTON, NC 28655**

If you have any questions, contact Robbin Buchanan at  
(828)438-4217 or [rbuchanan@presbyterywnc.org](mailto:rbuchanan@presbyterywnc.org).





*Time to Mark Your Calendars!!*

*Events for 2009*

**September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

**Senior High Rally**

**Byron Wade – Vice Moderator of the General Assembly is our keynote speaker**

**Montreat, NC – 3 pm until 6:15 pm**

**Join us for an afternoon of small groups, music, Recreation, worship and keynote. FREE.**

**November 13-15<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

**Middle School Retreat**

**Neeley Rentz will be our retreat leader.**

**Camp Grier, Old Fort, NC**

**Make plans now for your youth group to attend!  
Brochures will be available beginning in mid-Sept.**

**SNEAK PEAK FOR EVENTS IN 2010:**

**MARCH - MIDDLE SCHOOL RALLY**

**APRIL OR MAY – SH RETREAT FOR TRIENNIUM PARTICIPANTS**

**TRIENNIUM TRIP – JULY, 2010 PWNC WILL BE TAKING A BUS LOAD!!**

# **Senior High Youth Rally**

**Montreat Conference Center**

**September 13<sup>th</sup> 2009**

**3:00-6:15 pm**

**Upper Anderson**

**Keynote Speaker**

**Byron Wade**

**Vice Moderator of General Assembly**

***No registration necessary, no cost!!***

**This is a great event for youth from  
churches across the Presbytery to  
connect.**

**We look forward to seeing you there!**

***Need more information?***

**Email [bethgunn@bellsouth.net](mailto:bethgunn@bellsouth.net)**

**(please put PYC in subject line!)**

# **Low Cost/No Cost Ideas for Youth Leaders!!**

## **Pocketbook (bookbag) Bingo** (newsprint, markers)

Divide your players into groups of 4 to 10. Have each group make their bingo card out of a large sheet of newsprint. Ask the group to divide their newsprint into 25 squares with their marker. Once that has been done they get to write “FREE” in the center square. Now each group puts one item that they have on their person at the time (or in their purses, backpacks, etc. depending on the setting) in each square – they will have 24 different items on their Bingo card. Each group takes a turn taking one of their items off the board, announcing to the larger group what their item is (for example, a library card). If no other group has the same item (library card), then that group can REMOVE the item from their board. If another group has the same item, then the item is placed back on the board and must stay there. The groups take turns one at a time until one group has Bingo. Bingo being 5 items in a row removed– across, up and down, or diagonally.

## **Magazine Scavenger Hunt**

Divide your youth into groups of 4-10 people. Each group member needs to have an old magazine. This is basically a scavenger hunt using the magazines. Have a list ready of items for the groups find. This can be easily adapted to any theme (see below). The leader calls out the word or image. The groups search their magazines for a picture of the item, rip it out, and put it in the middle of their circle. The leader keeps reading items from the list with little time between items so that the groups must try to keep up with finding the pictures. For example, find a picture of summer, a picture of winter, of a family, of a large dog, etc. When you have finished reading the list quickly run through the list again so groups are able to find any missing pictures.

After the initial game has been played you can lead into each group making a collage out of the pictures that they chose to rip out of the magazines. If you are working with a theme create your list of items that would enhance your theme (for example, the theme for the retreat is “Over the Rainbow” so you might have a list that would have items such as rainstorm, rainbow, clouds, pot of gold, etc.

## **Pulse** (groups of 6 to 20 around a table or on the floor)

Everyone lays their hands on the table in front of them but then they take their right hand and place it over to the right in front of the person to their right (should be over this other person’s left hand). Now one person begins and that person slaps their right hand on the table. The next hand (not the next person) on the table is a left hand and it slaps – keep passing the slaps. If a person messes up they remove the hand that messed up. Play until only one person remains. Next introduce the double slap – if a person slaps their hand twice in a row then the slap reverses and goes the other direction. Play until only one player remains. There is also a move called the “thump” which using a fist and pounding once on the table means that the slap skips over the next hand in line!

## **YM today**

[www.ymtoday.com](http://www.ymtoday.com)

This site has a ton of information on youth ministry. Current articles, resources and ideas. You can also sign up for their twice a month email newsletter. A great way to get information dropped right into your inbox!

## **Hollywood Jesus**

[www.hollywoodjesus.com](http://www.hollywoodjesus.com)

This site has a wealth of information, reviews and ideas for you to use in keeping up with your youth and what they are watching, listening to and talking about! Check it out.

## **The Thoughtful Christian**

[www.thethoughtfulchristian.com](http://www.thethoughtfulchristian.com)

This site has a tremendous amount of information, resources and general youth ministry help on it. Check out the bible studies for youth section – there are some incredible studies that lead you through step by step for a great program.

## **Devotions 365 days of the year!**

[www.d365.org](http://www.d365.org)

What a cool site. A different devotion everyday of the year. This site is a collaboration between the PCUSA, The Episcopal Church and the Cooperative Baptist. Each devotion takes you through a series of pause, listen, think, pray and go – each with its own part of the devotion. Go take a look – play around with it – super resource.

# PLAY-OLOGY: EXPERIENCING GOD THROUGH THE ART OF PLAY

**Where:** Eastminster Presbyterian Church, Columbia SC

**When:** Saturday, Oct 24th  
9:00 am—4:30 pm

**Who:** For anyone who is young at heart!  
Beginning with high schoolers who are active  
leaders through senior adults

**Cost:** \$20 for pre-registrations/\$25 for walk-ons

## **What do you get to experience for the day?**

Creative worship, a theme party, choosing from 4 different workshop options, networking, and a box catered lunch!

## **Workshop Options:**

**Games Galore** - Start to finish, we will pack as many games into our time as humanly possible! Active games, “no equipment” games, quiet games, name games, and the list goes on and on.

**The WORD:** Wild Outrageous Responding Discipleship – Looking for creative ways to share God’s WORD? Experience ways to strengthen connections between Scripture and real life through a variety of interactive approaches to reading, hearing, and sharing God’s powerful WORD.

**Around the Table** –This class is designed to teach fun activities that can be played around tables by all ages at gatherings such as family night suppers, SS classes, retreats, and more.

**creART!** – Unleash your creativity with a variety of simple and purposeful art activities. Participants will go home with a number of completed projects, instructions, and ideas for use with all ages in VBS, gift-making workshops, service projects, and retreats.

Play-ology is sponsored by the Southern Annual Recreation Workshop, an endorsed organization of the Annual Recreation Workshop of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

Schedule for Day	
9–10	Registration
10–12	Community building theme party and creative worship
12-12:45	Box catered lunch
1-2:30	Workshop Choice #1
2:45–4:15	Workshop Choice #2
4:15–4:30	Farewells



**September 2009**

**PCUSA Monthly Hunger Fasts**

**September 4-6**

Were you aware that a number of denominational staff and divisions are participating in a once a month fast? That they are using this time to be in prayer for hungry places in this world, to seek spiritual discernment, and to learn about world conditions. You can join them and join with Presbyterians around the country in these monthly 40-hour fasts to help discern ways to respond to the Global Food Crisis. The fasts typically take place on the first weekend of every month, beginning on Friday evening and ending with Communion or a communal meal on Sunday. A different country and issue is highlighted each month and at the [www.pcusa.org/foodcrisis](http://www.pcusa.org/foodcrisis) website you can find prayers, liturgy, and fact sheets. To look at the materials for previous months, go to [www.pcusa.org/foodcrisis/archive](http://www.pcusa.org/foodcrisis/archive).

**2009 Peacemaking Offering October 4:**



“Justice and peace shall kiss each other  
” Psalm 85:10

For information about the offering and  
downloadable inserts go to  
[www.pcusa.org/peacemakingoffering](http://www.pcusa.org/peacemakingoffering)

## **UPCOMING CONFERENCES:**

**World Mission Celebration '09: Branches of the Same Vine**

**October 22-24 in Cincinnati**

Connect with other Presbyterians passionate about mission

Learn about mission and share your wisdom

Be sent forth to embrace your unique calling to mission

To register go to [www.pcusa.org/missioncelebration/](http://www.pcusa.org/missioncelebration/)

If you are interested in carpooling, Black Mountain Presbyterian Church may be able to include you in their church van, if enough people are interested to take the van. Contact Faith Bradley through Black Mountain Presbyterian Church for more information.

For a brochure or bulletin insert go to:

[www.pcusa.org/missioncelebration/kit/celebration09-brochure.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/missioncelebration/kit/celebration09-brochure.pdf)

[www.pcusa.org/missioncelebration/kit/ad-color.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/missioncelebration/kit/ad-color.pdf)

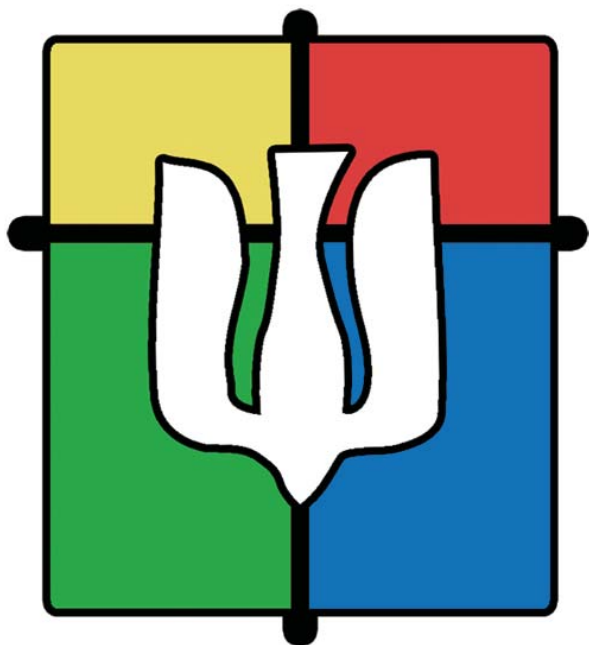
**October 30-31 Regional Multi-Cultural Conference in Charlotte**

Insert Flyer and workshop info from

[www.presbyofcharlotte.org/Portals/722/MulticulturalConference2009.pdf](http://www.presbyofcharlotte.org/Portals/722/MulticulturalConference2009.pdf)

Early Registration until September 23, 2009

*Come & Imagine a Church that looks like God's Kingdom...*



# Regional Multicultural Conference & Festival

Friday & Saturday,  
October 30-31, 2009  
CHARLOTTE, NC

God is bringing all nations and tongues  
to our church doors...

Do we embrace this adventure with hope?  
Or do we hunker down in fear?

*Where is  
your faith?*

*"A windstorm swept down on the lake, and the boat was filled with water, and they were in danger. They went to him and woke him up, shouting, 'Master, Master, we are perishing!' And he woke up and rebuked the wind and the raging waves; they ceased, and there was a calm. He said to them, 'Where is your faith?'*

*They were afraid and amazed, and said to one another, "who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?"*

*Luke 8:22-25*

Conference: First Presbyterian Church  
200 West Trade Street  
Charlotte, NC 28202

Festival: Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church  
101 West Sugar Creek Road  
Charlotte, NC 28213



**July 10, 2009**

**Letter from Barbara Nagy,  
PCUSA Mission Co-Worker  
in Malawi**

**[Barbara Nagy will be returning  
to the U.S. for the school year]**

**When a pumpkin is more than a  
pumpkin?**

Meet Mr. F, a grey-haired gentleman too old to know his actual age, who limped into the outpatient clinic several years ago with complaints of not being able to urinate, a frequent complaint of older men in Malawi. He was so wasted it was hard to find him inside his clothes. He had a severe urinary tract infection that resisted all conventional medicines available to treat him. Finally, we were able to determine that he had tuberculosis, and he improved with anti-tuberculosis meds. It took months more of iron supplementation and soy porridge provided by the Nickel-a-Meal program before he was healthy enough for a prostatectomy, but by then our operating rooms were closed for elective surgeries due to construction. As is often the case in Malawi, the waiting list at other institutions was over six months long, so Mr. F waited and waited, with a tube bypassing his blocked prostate, producing numerous problems.

The long-anticipated day of surgery finally arrived and was missed because Mr. F couldn't find a blood donor, which is required before prostate surgery can take place. By this time Mr. F and I were becoming good friends! A blood donor was arranged from within the hospital staff, and then Mr. F had an uneventful prostatectomy and was sent home. I didn't see him for about six months so I was surprised to find him sitting in the outpatient department several weeks ago with a big smile on his now full face. In his arms was the most beautiful pumpkin I have ever seen, which was a present to thank us for caring for him. This was an especially wonderful gift because, grown by Mr. F himself, it showed that he had recovered his health sufficiently to be able to till his fields again and provide food for his family.

**When a mission team is more than a mission team?**

At Nkhoma we have been blessed with many wonderful visitors who have taken the work of the hospital to heart and helped in so many ways. Our home presbytery of Western North Carolina is among the most faithful, as several members have now returned to Malawi to help for four or five years in a row. (You know you have a great team when they are personally known by all the airport customs agents!) Visitors were here just a few weeks ago and made a huge impact on the work we are able to do.

We have long struggled with a laboratory that fell far short of our needs for patient care. (We are a 220-bed hospital with four operating theatres, a maternity ward, and overflowing inpatient wards that couldn't check a creatinine (a check for kidney function) or do a full blood count. This resulted in many critical patient transfers, significant expenses for patients sent into Lilongwe for labs, and many patients simply doing without life-altering therapy because of lack of lab back-up. Three of our last five maternal deaths had significant medical problems that we couldn't adequately treat due to lack of laboratory assistance. Fortunately, recent events enabled this to change.

Lab equipment was found that would meet our basic needs, and friends from New Mexico, Western North Carolina Presbytery, and Canada graciously assisted with paying for the machines and beginning reagents. The sending mission lab organization, however, refused to sell the equipment unless there was someone available to install and run it. We were thrilled to learn that a member of our mission team is a certified laboratory technician; she was able at the last minute to arrange a trip to Michigan to get training on the new equipment. At the same time here in Malawi, the unheard-of blessing was unfolding of the availability of a lab technician from Holland for six-months and two Malawian lab technicians! We now have a well functioning lab that has in its first week of operation assisted in the diagnosis of several patients with liver disease, a tiny baby with HIV, a patient with severe kidney disease, a lady with side effects of her HIV medicines, and several others, even with extremely limited testing to stretch reagents as far as possible. We are so grateful to God who has made all this possible, and to our mission team, which was an essential part of making our new lab a reality. The mission statement of Nkhoma Hospital says that we will offer Christ-oriented, clinically excellent care, and with your help we have taken a big step towards assuring this happens.

### **What else is happening at Nkhoma?**

A new service level agreement with the Malawi government allows free care for children under 5; quality improvement, a safe motherhood program, newborn resuscitation workshops, HIV treatment and teaching, visiting burn teams, mobile ophthalmology clinics, active supervision of health centers, clinics for children under 5, and many other programs are growing steadily. We hope you will make time to come to Mission Celebration 09 in Cincinnati in October to learn more about this and other ministries. You can see pictures and talk more about things that are happening at Nkhoma.

We are blessed to be part of what God is doing in this part of His family, and blessed when we are able to share some of it with you.

Regards and peace,

Barbara Nagy

The 2009 Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study, p. 44

Dr. Barbara Nagy, PCUSA Mission Coworker in Nkhoma, Malawi is back in the U.S. and living in Morganton for the school year. She would like to visit as many churches as possible during her stay. *If you would like to have her preach or speak at your church, please contact her directly.*

Email: [banagy@globemw.net](mailto:banagy@globemw.net)

Home: 828-438-6287

Cell: 828-432-6720

(If you invite her, please be prepared to reimburse her travel expenses.)

Address: 123 Pearson Drive  
Morganton, NC 28655



**GREAT NEWS**  
Happy's Adoption is final!

# Malawi Mission Trip May 20-June 1, 2009

## Team Report—Written by Alice Salthouse



*I once heard a tale of a person who was struggling with faith issues and the amount of suffering there is in the world. In prayer this person asked God, “Why don’t you do something about all the pain and misery in this world, God?” God answered, “I did. I sent you.”*

On May 21, a team of 9 Presbyterians boarded a small jet in Charlotte, to begin the 10,000 mile journey to Malawi. We were a diverse group of men and women, each bringing a variety of life experiences to the adventure that lay ahead. This was the fifth such journey for the Presbytery of Western NC, but it was my first.

We were headed to a land where life is vastly different from what we are familiar. Malawi is called the “Warm Heart of Africa”. People there are pleasant and friendly even though their struggles are intense. They are kind to strangers and often give beyond their means.

As each of us signed up for the trip, we were unsure what tasks we would undertake. I was told that the purpose of this mission is more about being together and building friendships than it is about what we will do. I knew that we would be serving the needs of the Nkhoma Hospital where our missionary, Dr. Barbara Nagy is stationed and I knew we would be delivering supplies to the new school where Barbara’s daughter, Happy, attends. What I didn’t know was that I would get to participate in an amazing miracle that will save the lives of many Malawians.

Nkhoma Hospital has a catchment area of about 250,000 people. Malawians often travel great distances on foot to seek medical care there and many times people are brought to the hospital by members of their family. Malaria is a devastating disease and joins forces with AIDS to leave the country’s life expectancy at 35 years of age. Parasites and infectious diseases that are virtually nonexistent in the U.S. are common place there. Children and adults suffer the effects of malnutrition and starvation. It is difficult for me to comprehend the pervasive nature of the sickness in this land.

Two weeks before we were scheduled to leave, I received a phone call from the Presbytery office. I was asked if I could install some laboratory equipment in the Nkhoma hospital. I had worked in laboratory medicine for twenty years but I have been away from the lab for the past eight years. While I was concerned about my ability to do this, I was excited about the prospect of it all.

Over the next few days, it was determined that I should travel to Kalamazoo, Michigan for training on the instrument to be installed in the Nkhoma hospital laboratory. All the years working in the lab were still there and I actually remembered what was needed to get the job done.

To make a long story short, suffice it to say that there was a sequence of events that took place in Malawi, the US, Holland, and Korea that enabled the much needed laboratory equipment to be delivered and installed. This long story involved:

- finding the most appropriate instrumentation for this 3<sup>rd</sup> world setting
- getting the money to purchase the equipment
- having a person available who possessed the education and ability to install the equipment who just happened to be coming with a mission team
- getting funding to send that person to Kalamazoo to train on installing the equipment
- bringing a medical technologist to the Nkhoma hospital laboratory from Holland to work in the lab for a year to develop a fully trained staff for the long term
- having that person present to be trained by the one installing the instrumentation
- bringing a Malawian from a northern village who has a lab background to prepare for working in that lab long term

This sequence of events took place in less than 3 weeks. It would have been difficult for anyone to put all these things together over six months or a year. For God, the pieces of this puzzle came together quickly and were neatly fitted together showing a beautiful picture.

During our time in Malawi, this was not the only project executed by the team and it definitely was not the only time that the miraculous power of God was acutely evident.

We delivered school supplies to the Ebenezer School mentioned earlier.

We visited and delivered supplies to the Ministry of Hope Crisis Nursery. This is a place where abandoned babies (birth to 2 years old) are taken and feed and nurtured until they are adopted or reach 2 years of age at which time they are sent to an orphanage.

Two new oxygen concentrators were delivered to the hospital.

We cleaned and painted the Guardian Houses at the hospital. This is an area on the hospital campus where families of patients sleep and prepare meals while a loved one is cared for in the hospital. It is also the place where women who have high risk pregnancies stay so that they will be near the hospital when they go into labor. These rooms are bare and people sleep on a cement floor.

We repaired many things in the hospital that were broken.

We painted hospital beds.

We delivered money that would help build new classrooms to the Ebenezer School.

We did all these things and much more. But, as I said earlier the things that we did were not the best part of the mission. The best part came when we stood in church and sang hymns and prayed with the Malawians with one voice. The deep joy came when:

- We had Malawian friends over to eat dinner with us
- When they showed us how to wrap our heads with scarves the way they do
- We had devotions and sang songs together after dinner
- We went with Barbara and Happy on a hike to the top of Nkhoma Mountain
- We acted like children and got the giggles after lights out in our cots at night
- We played the drums with the nurses and teachers after a meal together
- We listened to the deep rich voices of people walking on the road singing praises in this country that is one of the poorest in the world
- We realized that in the midst of suffering and hopeless situations, Jesus shows up and gives hope and life just like he did when he called Lazarus out of his tomb

It truly is more about the being than about the doing. We left that place knowing that the lives of the people there would be improved because we came. We left knowing that our lives would be improved because we went. God is good – All the time.



**June 30, 2009**

## **Letter from Becca Young, PCUSA Mission Co-Worker in Indonesia**

### **Connect the dots**

Friends,

As human beings who look for deeper meaning in our lives, nearly all of us feel that there is an underlying path we follow. However, I once heard someone describe the path we follow not as a continuous straight line running directly from beginning to end, from birth to death, but more like an adult version of connect the dots.

Which is to say, our life proceeds in a series of fits and starts. We linger at one point (one dot, one location, one job, one state of mind) for a while, then decide it's time for a change and take a leap to the next point, where we settle in for a little while longer. When we are in the midst of this sequence of leaping alternated with hanging out, we are often hard-pressed to discern any sort of pattern. But just like when as children we connected what looked like randomly arranged dots into a picture, once we've made it past a series of dots, we can look back and see a pattern to our lives.

It's certainly true for me, a person whose address you should write down in pencil because I'll be leaping to the next address before you know it. Yet when I remain still long enough to turn and look back at the many dots I've leapt on and off of, an interesting pattern emerges.

I first served in Indonesia 20 years ago as a nutritionist for Church World Service. I worked in Papua with a local public health foundation. During those three years, I also learned the Indonesian language.

Because I was working for an organization with "church" in the name, people frequently invited me to pray and to preach. When I told them I wasn't a pastor, they began to tell me that I ought to be one, so I came back to the United States and enrolled at Columbia Theological Seminary. During seminary, I felt a call to become a professor and went directly from seminary to Fordham University, where I received a doctorate in theology.

But when I graduated, tenured faculty positions were few and far between. While searching for a job, I paid the bills by doing adjunct teaching and selling organic scones at the local farmers market.

Although I enjoyed the teaching and the farmers market, I began to question my decisions. My Indonesian years were far in the past and seemed insignificant, and all the years I'd spent in school now seemed to have been futile, since I couldn't get a job. It was a difficult period in my life and I certainly didn't feel very satisfied with the seemingly random set of dots (choices) that had led me to a lot of purposeless jumping.

Sometime in early 2005, sitting over coffee talking with my friend Patti (whom I met at the farmers market) about how pointless my life seemed, she suddenly said to me, "Has it occurred to you that



Becca on the move to the next "dot" in her life. June 22, Bromo volcano, east Java.

maybe you could help with tsunami relief? You have a health background, you're a pastor and you speak Indonesian."

It was as if Patti had spun me around and helped me look back at my own dots and seen the connection—there was a discernable picture after all!

Within a month of that conversation with Patti, I was on the plane to Sumatra, Indonesia, as Presbyterian Disaster Assistance's liaison for tsunami relief. Through that work, I met Robert Borrong, who is the treasurer of one of our partner disaster organizations in Indonesia. Dr. Borrong also happens to be an ethics professor and was the president of Jakarta Theological Seminary. He mentioned to a mutual friend of ours that the seminary needed a new theology professor and that person told him he should talk to me.



Becca with Yeryandri Tungga at graduation on June 6, 2009. Becca was Yeryandri's advisor for his senior thesis on mission theology.

Since you are reading this newsletter, you know how that conversation turned out: I am now a professor at that seminary. Yet another dot has been connected and become a part of the emerging picture of my life. Sometimes I am nearly overwhelmed by the realization of how those disparate parts of my life—health, Indonesia, theology, and teaching—have come together in such an unexpected way. I feel fortunate to be able to give back to God and my neighbor after having received so much along the way.

This realization was brought out even more strongly recently when I had the privilege of witnessing the graduation of my first set of advisees and four students for whom I had served as thesis advisor. The seminary held its annual graduation ceremony on June 6, and it was a meaningful moment as I watched those students, of whom I

am so proud, walk across that stage and receive their diplomas.

As I tell this story, I am deeply aware that my life is not unique. Hundreds of PC(USA) mission personnel are at work on every continent and quite a few islands across this big wide world and in the United States. Every one of them has a connect-the-dots story of their own. We all have been given amazing chances to serve in a variety of positions, after having been led by the power of God's Spirit assisting us in our leaps of faith from one place to the next.

It is with great excitement that I therefore wish to share with you an upcoming opportunity where you can get to know some of our mission personnel and hear directly from them about how their dots have gotten connected, thanks to your support, into a beautiful picture of mission.



The 2009 graduating class at Jakarta Theological Seminary as they prepare to sing a song during the closing worship service.

Forty PC(USA) mission personnel will visit hundreds of congregations across the United States this fall to tell how God is at work around the world. World Mission Challenge, a reprise of a similar event in 2007, will be held September 25 to October 18, 2009. Learn more at the [Mission Challenge Web site](#) or by calling Ellen Dozier at 888-728-7228, x 5916.

Becca



**July 20, 2009**

## **Letter from Becca Young, PCUSA Mission Co-Worker in Indonesia**

### **Indonesia weeps again**

The 17th of July, 2009, has become yet another date marred by tragedy in the annals of Indonesian history. On that day, two suicide bombers exploded bombs that they had smuggled into hotels using briefcases and then

assembled in the rooms where they were staying. When they set off the metal detector on entering the hotel and were asked, “Is there a laptop in that briefcase?” they would answer yes and be allowed to proceed.

The two hotels, the Marriott and the Ritz Carlton, are extremely popular breakfast spots for expatriates, particularly on Friday mornings when many leading business people gather to network. Those who planned the bombings were aware of this. Prior to detonating his bomb, one bomber positioned himself directly in front of a room where a group of Western executives were sharing breakfast.

I was in Jakarta but was safely tucked away in my inconspicuous office at the back of the seminary complex. I didn’t hear the explosions but quickly heard the news via a text message and watched the events unfold on the Internet.

In the aftermath of the bombings, it became abundantly clear that the Indonesian people do not agree with the terrorists’ methods, their murder of innocent people, or their interpretation of the Qur’an. I have seen evidence of their shock and outrage nearly everywhere I have turned in the days since the bombings took place.

There was instant response through social networks on the Internet. Within a very short time, a new Facebook page entitled “Indonesia Unite” had 12,000 members. The same two words circulated on Twitter and became the number one “tag” (shared phrase) worldwide over the weekend. An Indonesian band’s YouTube video entitled, “Kami Tidak Takut” (“We are not Afraid”) has had thousands of hits. The song calls for the country to resist being intimidated by those who resort to violence and thereby weaken Indonesia.

Even if you don’t understand what all these computer terms mean, let me explain it in more simple terms: the people of Indonesia are using the Internet and cell phones in a variety of creative ways to tell the world that they do not agree with what happened last Friday. They also remind each other that they should be supportive of one other rather than divided through violence.



A row of flower arrangements expressing sympathy for the victims of the bombings, donated by local businesses and families, across the street from the Marriot Hotel, July 21, Jakarta.



Flowers at the Marriot Hotel that was bombed in Jakarta on July 17, 2009.

Most importantly, in a country with a predominantly Muslim population, many Muslims are publicly declaring that what the bombers have done is not in accordance with the teachings of their holy scriptures. One Muslim woman on Facebook wrote, “The jihad they think they are fighting is a false one,” and adds that their actions are a smear on Islam. Another writes that she is keeping the victims in her prayers with the sincere hope they are at God’s side in heaven. Meanwhile, a Muslim man refuses to believe the bombers will ever enjoy such an exalted place. Others refer to the bombers as cowards. The song says that they are not to be regarded as heroes.

These sentiments circulating through cyberspace are also evident in the real world. A positive sign is that life continues to go on in Jakarta. I went for a stroll on Friday night and went past a McDonald's and a Pizza Hut and a Starbucks and a Burger King. All of them were filled to capacity with Indonesians, or at least with those who weren't at the Harry Potter movie opening across the street. So American capitalism is alive and well even on the day of such a tragedy. It would be wrong to think that the violence comes out of any hatred of the United States on the part of Indonesians.

The newspapers on Saturday morning reflected the country’s collective shock, with headlines reading, “Indonesia Weeps Again” and “Black Friday.” The articles, the editorials, and the reports of government officials were one in speaking out against what had happened and calling for swift investigation and persecution of the guilty parties. Nowhere have I heard a single word of support or praise for what has happened. No one has claimed responsibility, which I believe is a sign that the perpetrators are aware that they are being condemned rather than applauded.

Perhaps the word I have heard most often from the Indonesians on the street over the past few days is simply, “Why?” They can’t understand why after four years of peace and prosperity, people would want to destroy the positive image that Indonesia has begun to enjoy.

The most common answer to the question is that an extremist minority in Indonesia seeks to turn the country into an Islamic nation. Pursuant of that goal, they seek to discredit the current president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (commonly referred to as SBY). SBY, himself a devout Muslim, leads the country as a pluralist nation that respects religious freedom. On July 8th, the people reelected SBY to a second five-year term, in what was only their second direct election of a president in the 64-year history of Indonesia, the third-largest democracy in the world.

Let us pray that the many voices calling for peace and unity be heard and continue to inspire the Indonesian people to resist those who condone violence and separatism.

Let us pray for the families, friends, and colleagues of those who lost their lives in the appalling violent acts of Friday, July 17, 2009.

Let us pray as well for those who were involved in and supported the bombings—that God will open their minds and soften their hearts to see the futility of using violence to achieve their goals, and that they might “beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks” (Micah 4:3), and turn their bombs into something life-giving rather than destructive.

In Christ’s peace,  
Becca

*The 2009 Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study*, p. 113

## **Rachel Brown, PCUSA Young Adult Volunteer in Kenya**

Rachel Brown has returned to the U.S. and will be speaking at Mills River Presbyterian Church on August 2. She will be moving to Seattle, WA, but we hope she will come back to the presbytery to speak this Fall.

To my dear Friends and Family,

Several months ago, Icaciri invited students from the African Nazarene University to conduct a “Weekend Challenge” for the students. This was to be a weekend of worship, preaching, and saving. I cannot say that I’d ever had any Pentecostal experiences before. In fact, I was so nervous that I had my answers prepared (“Are you saved, Rachel?” “Yes, it happened on Easter Sunday a few thousand years ago.”)

What originally drew Shurie and I out of the apartment were the blood-curdling screams coming from the school. Because Icaciri is a boarding school, we occasionally hear noise coming from the school-side of the compound, but never had we heard such a fuss. We left our apartment at around 8:00 p.m. to find the hundred-or-so boarders stuffed in the chemistry lab, some on chairs, some on the lab tables, some hanging out of the pane-less windows gasping for air and all dancing with flailing arms, singing glorious, Kenyan praise songs.

In all the excitement a few students had taken to screaming and fainting, filled with the Holy Spirit. Thus our work began, catching girls and fanning faces before the ministers could guide them safely to the “recovery room.”

A tall man sauntered to the front, his legs bending in all kinds of twisted directions, like a marionette. He huffed and puffed into the microphone, dabbing the sweat from his brow, all the time bending and straightening his legs.

Watching him made me tired. He must have noticed, for the same minute that I began daydreaming he glanced at Shurie and I, saying “Visit-ooors yes, introooo-duce yourselves!” Maureen jumped in and introduced us before he said anything else. “At least I can say that they aren’t visitors. They are ours, and they are from Icaciri!”

His remarks to me began slowly with comments like, “There is nothing-ah wrong-ah with the way you are made-ah, right Rachel?” and “You may tell me that I have funny teeth, but I tell you that I am made-ah in the image-ah of the LORD. Can I get an Amen, Rachel?” I don’t know if it was just because he couldn’t remember Shurie’s name and somehow mine stuck, but he just wouldn’t let me alone. It seemed as if every other remark was directed towards me.

The topic was not something unusual for a girl’s boarding school; every teenage girl needs to hear that she is beautifully, wonderfully and uniquely made. Every teenage girl needs to understand that she was crafted for a purpose and to have confidence that one day that purpose will burst forth. But I’m not a teenage girl anymore.

As I listened to his sermon, I was so affected that I began to cry. It was very un-Kenyan of me, and I could not understand how I had been so touched by a sermon filled with fancy Pentecostal jargon meant for high-schoolers. But I was changed, and for the first time in my life I actually believed that there was nothing wrong with the way I was made, physically, mentally, or emotionally.

Now, as I am followed with a chant of, “Mzungu! Mzungu!” when I walk by the nursery school in Gatundu town I remember that minister’s words, confidently acknowledging my differences with a smile and a wave.

My experience at Icaciri has been formed around hundreds of unique conversations. Every day I stop to talk to Martin, our school carpenter, about the new project he’s working on. I love saying hello to “Obama,” the worker who always wears an Obama hat or asking Baba Njeri about the different kinds of trees he cuts for firewood. I can remember when these conversations felt forced and filled with too many empty silences. I can now see how much I’ve grown. Why *wouldn’t* I stop to ask Martin what color he’s painting the store?

One of the greatest changes I’ve made this year is in the way that I approach relationships. The friendships I have made here are so important to me, that my experience is defined by them. I could never convey my life in Gatundu without telling you about the time I woke up to the sound of Kathy’s “Hodi!” (“Anyone home?”) at our door just after dawn, or the look on Keith’s face when Shurie and I gave him his very own story book, or the time Maureen, Keith, and I had a speed-walking contest back from Mrs. Kariuki’s house. It is difficult for me to imagine a day without seeing these friends. In fact, they are not my friends, they are my family, and I will not forget them (in the words of my dear Form 2 students,) “until the termites have a great feast on my body.”

Leaving Maureen, Kathy, and Keith will be one of the most difficult separations I’ve ever experienced, and knowing that I may never see them again makes me deeply sad. In my sadness I plea to God, because I just want to be promised that this is not the end.

Hebrews 12:1 reminds me that though my journey to Kenya is coming to a close, I must still “run with perseverance the race that is set before us.” I know that God cannot promise me those things which I long for, but He can help me continue to live and grow in the relationships I’ve made this year. He can help me to remember Maureen and her family and to find the words to tell others the stories which are so dear to my heart.

The Lord sent me out last September, and as He draws me back home I pray that you would open your arms to receive me as the new person I’ve become. I pray that I can find the words to share my experiences with you and that you will open your ears and your hearts to my stories. Most of all, I pray that I will have the courage to keep on keepin’ on, with the hope that I will encourage others to do the same.

Peace in Christ,

**Rachel**

For more from Rachel’s Blog go to [www.rachelbrownkenya.blogspot.com](http://www.rachelbrownkenya.blogspot.com). For formal letters from Rachel Brown and other Young Adult Volunteers, go to [www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/yav](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/yav)



**June 17, 2009**

**Letter from Frank & Nancy Dimmock,  
PCUSA Mission Co-Workers in Lesotho**

**[Frank & Nancy Dimmock are back in the  
U.S. for interpretation during August and  
September]**

Dear Friends,

She was rummaging through our garbage bags the day before yesterday, her breath frosty in the wintry air, her thin frame draped in a thin blanket. She looked up, frightened, as I drove past her into our carport. I came out to greet her. She responded with wariness. Then I said, "Please tie the bags back up when you've finished." And I was amazed by the transformation. Her face lit up with a big smile as she nodded her agreement. What had caused the change? She heard my unconscious acceptance of her in my lack of censure and responded with relief and pleasure. We connected. Wow.

And she taught me a wonderful lesson. Grace and mercy—attributes of God Himself—are gifts that we can give one another. They are gifts I need to extend to my children and my husband more often. They are gifts I need to give my friends. They are gifts I need to give to myself—wondering, as I often do, about the value of my "ministry in the home."

God punctuated this lesson in a recent reading from Joni Eareckson Tada:

Glory, I've learned, is what God is all about. His essential being. Whenever you talk about His character or attributes—like holiness, love, compassion, justice, truth, grace or mercy—that's God's glory .... So how is it that you and I can glorify God? It happens every time we reveal His attributes in the course of our daily lives. Every time you share the good news of Christ with another. Every time you reflect patience in the middle of an upsetting or perplexing problem. Every time you smile from the heart or offer an encouraging word. Whenever those around you see God's character displayed in your attitudes and responses, you are displaying His glory .... God's glory isn't reserved for a temple of stone or some heavenly vista. It can shine out clearly while you are changing a flat on the freeway ... or counseling an angry co-worker ... or lying in a hospital bed ... or balancing two crying babies in the church nursery.

What encouraging, heart-lifting, validating thoughts! We bring God glory when we accept and minister to beggars and garbage-rummagers. We bring God glory when we wipe our kids' noses and attend to their skinned knees. We bring God glory when we visit a local city orphanage and love on the kids there. We bring God glory when we listen to a discouraged colleague or an overwhelmed pastor. We bring God glory when we share ideas and best practices for appropriate responses to meeting the needs of children and communities across the African continent. We share God's glory when we help a fellow passenger with a too-heavy load—struggling through the airport or struggling through life. Simple things. Grace and mercy. Gifts that we can give each other. We hope that you are experiencing them and sharing them in your daily lives, too—and, thereby bringing God glory!

All is well with our family. Nathan is working as a volunteer coordinator with Ministry of Hope in Malawi this summer and loving it. Moses is working on a required summer school course, anticipating



Nancy with a baby in an orphanage in Maseru, Lesotho.

his graduation in December. Jesse is working as waterfront coordinator for Montreat summer activities and is enjoying that. Katie has applied to and been accepted to Anderson University in Indiana in the fall, planning to major in physical education and coaching. This direction came from her wonderful experience here working as assistant PE teacher at the international primary school. We have really enjoyed having her with us these past few months. Andrew completes primary school in a few weeks and will graduate to the big international high school called Machabeng (which literally means “the place of many nations”). He faces that transition with some trepidation and would appreciate your prayers. Alifa, Isaac, and Jackson are all doing well, enjoying school and their many friends. The primary school



Frank with a pastor friend in Ethiopia.

closes on July 3 and reopens August 24. We will be able to spend that interim in the States! We are looking forward to seeing family and to visiting with some of you. The kids and I will be there for five weeks, but Frank will be there for a full three months of itineration, including two weeks of World Mission Challenge.

We hope you and your presbytery have heard about and signed up for World Mission Challenge! Forty PC(USA) mission personnel will visit hundreds of congregations across the United States this fall to tell how God is at work around the world. World Mission Challenge ‘09 will be held September 25–October 18, 2009. Learn more: at [the Mission Challenge Web site](#) or call Ellen Dozier at 888-728-7228, x5916.



A well at Akobo Hospital in Sudan.

And Mission Challenge will conclude with World Mission Celebration, a large gathering for Presbyterians who care deeply about mission. This event will be held October 22–24 in downtown Cincinnati, Ohio, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel and the adjoining Duke Energy Center. Learn more at [the Mission Celebration Web site](#) or by calling Lis Valle at 888-728-7228 5279.

With love from all of us,

Frank, Nancy, Nathan, Moses, Jesse, Katie, Andrew, Alifa, Isaac and Jackson



**July 1, 2009**

**email from**

**Amanda Craft, PCUSA Mission  
Co-Worker in Guatemala**

“Surprise, Surprise!”

Hello All,

Well, much to our surprise, the baby came a bit early - 20 days early to be exact! He was born on Monday, June 29th, weighing 6lbs. 6oz and measuring 51 cm - between 20 and 21 inches long. The baby and I are healthy and back at home adjusting. Unfortunately, Omar was in the US for the birth for emergency gallbladder removal. He is on his way back to Guatemala right now. Fortunately, God has placed many special people in our lives, and the baby and I were well cared for,

especially by Marcia Towers - another mission co-worker living in Antigua. And, yeah, my mom arrived today.

We don't have to have a name for the baby until we register him with the government later next week. Since he came so early we hadn't settled on one. We'll let you know once we do!

Thank you all for all of your help and well wishes during the pregnancy. In some ways I still can't believe he's here.

I'll send pictures soon.

Blessings,

Amanda

Presbyterian Church (USA) Mission Co-Worker

Facilitator of the Presbyterian Women of Guatemala Program

Email - [amanda.craft@pcusa.org](mailto:amanda.craft@pcusa.org)

TITLE: The Church Lives On!

TEXT: "This is none other than the house of God and this is the gate of heaven."

Genesis 28:17

PREACHED: August 9, 2009, Bethel Presbyterian Church

## THE CHURCH LIVES ON!

I suppose it is no secret why I chose this particular passage as a text for my sermon. For it tells the story of why Jacob named the place where he spent the night "Bethel," a Hebrew word, meaning "the house of God." Jacob called it that because he said "Surely the Lord is in this place!"

Why did this congregation choose the name of Bethel?

One might suppose it was because this is such a beautiful place, this lovely valley surrounded by such awe inspiring peaks as Cold Mountain, Mt Pisgah and Lickstone Ridge. Surely God must live in such a place! And that may be why they chose the name of Bethel.

But Jacob did not name the first "Bethel" that because of the beauty of the place. He named it because that was where he met God.

Jacob spent the night there because he was on the lam. He was running for his life. He had done a terrible thing. He had deceived his father and cheated his brother, Esau. In fact Esau was so angry he wanted to kill Jacob

The sun had set as Jacob came to a desolate place. So he spent the night there with a rock for a pillow. And during the night he dreamed. He dreamed he saw a ladder or a stairway to heaven. And God came down the stairway and stood beside him. I think it says something about the character of Jacob that God had to tell him who he was. "I am Yahweh, he says, the God of your granddaddy Abraham and your daddy Isaac."

God found Jacob. Jacob had not come there looking for God. Judging by what he had done, Jacob was not what you might call a godly person. In fact he might have thought of this desolate place as "God forsaken." But Lo and behold God was there!

And God promises him he is going to give him land and lots of it, and children and lots of them. Before this Jacob had thought he had to fight for what he got in life, to lie and cheat and steal.

And now God tells him he is going to give it to him, not because he was so deserving but solely because of grace. This wasn't the merit system. It is something the world has a hard time understanding. It was grace. And God says he is going to bless the whole world through him and his children. Bless the world through a crook like Jacob? Yet that is what He says.

God make three promises.

The first is that he will be with him, wherever he goes, whether he is awake or sleeping.

The second is that he will keep him. God will protect Jacob. He will not let his foot be moved.

Thirdly, he would bring him home again. Those of you, who have moved away, know how it is nice to come home again. There is something about returning to the place where you grew up.

But something we may want even more is to come back home to our family, not just physically, but to be reconciled to those from whom we have been estranged. How pleasant it is says the psalmist when we can live together in unity!

Jacob was at odds with his brother Esau, who wanted to kill him. To be reconciled with those we have offended is another kind of grace that I think we would all like to have.

When Jacob finally did come home some years later, he was so afraid of what Esau might do that he sent him present after present. But, much to his surprise, Esau hugged his neck and kissed him. They both cried. What a blessing that kind of reunion is. May we all know that kind of grace!

Yet, I suspect we all have known that kind of grace in one way or another. And that is what has brought us back to this place. This place called Bethel.

That is we have all experienced a “Bethel” in our lives - a time when God appeared to us even though we may not even have been looking for him.

We have known a time when God showed his goodness to us when we were still undeserving. We have known times when we were in crisis, perhaps in danger of losing our lives, or some other serious trouble and God intervened, not because we were good but because He is good. Not because we were deserving, but because he is gracious.

We may have experienced that grace thru persons who came into our lives and treated us better than we deserved. It may have been a Sunday school teacher like Florence Garner, or a church elder like C. S. Rollins or someone like Lucy West or Nellie McCracken.

I experienced grace at the hands of this congregation. Coming here straight out of seminary, I had a lot of things to learn. This congregation was understanding and forgiving. You treated me with grace!

God became flesh in Jesus, but he also takes fleshly form in other persons through whom his grace and love can and does shine.

What I am trying to say is that though the Bethel Presbyterian Church as a congregation no longer exists, the Bethel Presbyterian Church that is part of the Body of Christ lives on in the hearts and lives of all of you who experienced the grace of Christ through the ministry of this church. And by ministry, I don’t mean just the ministers of this congregation, but the whole congregation, for ministry is what all of us are called to do.

Thank goodness this historic structure still stands. But even if it were to cease to exist, the church still lives on.

I remind you that for fifty years, this congregation existed without a building of its own. For a church is not a building, it is not an institution, as John Calvin taught, it is basically an invisible church that lives in the hearts of all those touched by the grace of Jesus Christ.

This church lives on also, in the congregations it helped to start, at Waynesville, Canton, and Hazelwood.

As James Newsome writes in *Texts for Preaching*, “We constitute ourselves for worship in a church that exists independently of any particular building and which will continue to exist even if that particular (building) should tumble into ruins.”

When we come to the communion table, we come as members of different congregations, but we all come as members of the body of Christ, as persons who met God in many different and often unexpected places and experienced grace that, like Jacob of old, while we were yet sinners, he loved us.

This is what “Bethel” is all about, a time when God came into our lives and transformed us so that we could go home again. At Bethel, we became reunited with God through grace and reconciled with each other

“How awesome is this place. This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!”