

## “Listen to the Music”

By Moderator, Ray Meute, Jr.

The music of the Kingdom plays on. It is always playing. In the book of Revelation we read of the heavenly beings always giving praise and adoration to the Lord on high. This suggests that there is ongoing music. This means that we can tune in.

As with all music, it has highs and lows. It has many contrasts. Sometimes it sounds chaotic. Sometimes it goes on, and we wait for resolution of the sounds. There are slow moments in the score, and there are fast moving parts as well. There are very quiet times and very loud and rambunctious times.

But the music of the Kingdom plays on! Do you know this? The news of Donegal Presbytery attests to the music of the Kingdom all the time. As you read about it within this publication and on the Web site, and as you hear about all that is going on in Donegal Presbytery, if you pay attention, if you listen closely, you can hear the music.

Listen for the music. It will feed your soul. It will lift you up. It will make your heart beat faster. We can all play the music of the Kingdom. We can play it together. Let the music play on!

## Natural Church Development

Frequently, measures which are successful in the short run produce exactly the opposite of the desired outcomes in the long run. For example, if you help Christians discover their spiritual gifts, but fail to help them find suitable areas of ministry, you may see their initial excitement soon dwindle to frustration. Many may become “immunized” against the very concept of gift-oriented ministry.

Thinking of the church as a living organism helps us recognize this principle of interdependence. “Organic” thinking helps us to see how the different areas of church development are interconnected and dependent on each other and how changes in one area might have long-term ramifications, positive or negative, for other areas.

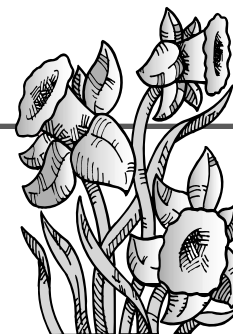
Visit [ncd-international.org](http://ncd-international.org) and contact local coaches Nan Best (717-741-4322) or Dan Snyder (717-330-4480) to learn how you can apply the principles of God in nature to your church using Natural Church Development.

# DONEGAL Dialogue

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## Coming together in prayer, conversation, and discernment!

By Charlie Gross, Associate Executive Presbyter

In more and more times and places, we are coming together as sisters and brothers in Christ for prayer, conversation, and discernment! Your Council is deeply committed to this process for finding Christ's will in guiding the presbytery. They have re-created the council docket for prayer and conversation. They are meeting in twos and threes for prayer and discussion about mission priorities. The Transition Team has invited you (sometimes more than once) into gatherings designed to assess our core values through your images, stories, and passions. The Synod of the Trinity has hosted “table talks” to discover the yearnings of our Christ-serving hearts. I have invited your presbytery moderators, stated clerk, chair of administration, and chair of human resources into an advisory council for my work. We meet via conference calls for prayer and discussion on my work priorities (and non-priorities).

As we seek to be faithful leaders in this time and place, we do well to discover new ways of being highly engaged in prayer and dialogue with other disciples of Jesus Christ. Faithful leaders strive for transparency in their work and witness and constantly look for conversation partners to sharpen their thinking. In the book, “*Tried and True: Eleven Principles of Church Growth*” from Frazer Memorial

United Methodist Church, by John E. Mathison, the board spent hours and hours in prayer and discernment before making changes in the church. They were led by the Holy Spirit in their work and endeavored to discern the mind of Christ together in their prayer and dialogue.

This principle of prayer, conversation, and dialogue is critical in this time of “no easy answers.” It is also very difficult, as we are people who have a self image of being our very own “action figures!” Getting things done, making things happen, solving problems, and moving on. Prayer, conversation, dialogue and discernment slow things down. The waters can get muddier and murkier as we wrangle with feelings, emotions, and traditions.

My prayer for you in this time of trial, turbulence, and transition is that you will find a new prayer partner, a new discernment group, a new way of gathering with disciples of the Lord for encouragement, prayer, and dialogue. I pray that you will discover new and innovative ways to sharpen your witness and grow your faith.

It's a very real honor and privilege to serve Christ beside you!

*With Love, Charlie Gross*

## The Donegal Digest

**Bellevue (W. Davies, Jr.)**—During Lent, the church holds Wednesday Lenten luncheon services. This year, the theme is “The Shepherd and the Cross.” Services are approximately 30 minutes followed by a light lunch.

**Bethany (L. Kelsey)**—While Bellevue covers lunches, Bethany is holding Wednesday evening suppers during Lent. These include both services and studies. Different groups within the church sponsor the meals. At each meal, the sponsoring group provides meat and a beverage, and the members are asked to bring side dishes and desserts to share.

**Centre (J. Biller)**—A Lenten video series is held throughout the five weeks of Lent. The series is titled “In the Dust of the Rabbi: Faith Lessons on Becoming a Disciple.” Studies begin each Wednesday evening at 7 p.m.

**Fairview (Dr. M. Atkinson)**—Cleaning the church has never been so much fun as when Fairview holds a “Work by Day, Play by Night” event. Church cleaning is a cooperative effort in the afternoon followed by an evening of dinner and games.

**First, West Chester (Dr. W. Hess)**—The church is looking forward to good weather by planning their annual camping trip. This year, they will visit French Creek State Park for a weekend in June. Hiking, fishing, boating, and more are on the docket for this relaxing time of fellowship and enjoying God's creation.

**First, York (Dr. J. Morgan)**—A pamphlet of Lenten and Easter Experiences offered by the church describes a service of healing and wholeness on Shrove Tuesday, an Ash Wednesday service, a Seder Meal, Wednesday and Sunday Lenten services, and Holy Week services including Palm/Passion Sunday, Stations of the Cross, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Morning/Day of Resurrection Services.

**Highland (W. Jackson, Interim)**—Celebration of Highland's 50th Anniversary will last all year long. The centerpiece of the event will be held on Pentecost, Sunday May 11, when Highland's first pastor, Kirk Hudson, will return to preach. The church was originally chartered in May of 1958.

**Oxford (K. Slinkard)**—Youth in grades 1 through 8 are invited to join the Adventure Club. Activities beginning at 4 p.m. on Wednesday evenings include homework help, kids choirs, pizza time, and more.

**Paoli (Dr. J. P. Vaughn)**—The Ash Wednesday event is designed especially for children and families. The evening begins in the fellowship hall with three learning/craft stations to experience. Each station helps families to “Journey with Jesus from Ash Wednesday to Easter.” A service involving the children's choirs completed the evening.

**Stewartstown (Dr. R. LaForce)**—A Lenten Bible study, beginning on Feb. 13, included topics such as, “What is Death?” and “The Final Judgment.” The study concluded on March 12.

## United in Faith!

Donegal Presbytery is united through faith in Jesus Christ and demonstrates God's love to each other, the community, and the world. Our goals and priorities are to:

- Build healthy, vibrant congregations
- Provide leadership development for lay members and ministers
- Promote evangelism and new church development
- Engage in outreach to the world with ministries of compassion

In a time when some Presbyteries find themselves at risk and in turmoil, Donegal Presbytery is providing a strong and vibrant ministry to its members. It is dedicated to the goals and priorities outlined above. Its many mission activities can be viewed on the Donegal Presbytery Web site. The Presbytery could use your financial support in order to keep this dynamic ministry alive for untold years to come.

One way to assist this ministry is to create a permanent fund. A permanent fund, often referred to as a memorial or endowment fund, is an enduring tribute to a spouse, family member, or loved one. You

make a gift to the Presbyterian Foundation which invests your gift and pays the income in perpetuity to the charitable beneficiary named in your gift agreement. The fund can be established during your lifetime or through a bequest. You or your heirs can also contribute additional gifts to the fund after it is established.

Did you know that a \$100,000 permanent endowment fund placed with the Foundation in 1981 would have paid out over \$328,000 to mission and have a principal value of \$301,000 today? That's an average annual investment return exceeding 10%, and an average annual total return payout of more than 5%.

Establishing a permanent endowment fund with the Foundation allows you to make an expression of faith that will provide support for Donegal Presbytery today, tomorrow, and well into the future. If you are interested in learning more about how you can help Donegal Presbytery move into the future through a permanent fund, contact Paula Kem, your Development Officer, at 1-888-711-1312 or [pak@fdn.pcusa.org](mailto:pak@fdn.pcusa.org).

# Highland Mission

*Project Homecoming: Recover, Rebuild, Rejoice!*

Since 1996, Highland's Global Outreach Committee has sponsored a yearly Mission Work Trip beginning with disaster relief in Homestead, FL. From Hurricane Andrew, to Hurricane Georges, earthquakes in El Salvador, the flooding of the Tar River in NC to Hurricanes Ivan, Charley and Isabel and the flooding of the Susquehanna River in NY and now Hurricane Katrina, Highland has helped families rebuild their lives.

Hurricane Katrina struck in August 2005, so why has Highland waited until now to travel to New Orleans? In 2004, Hurricanes Ivan, Charley, Jeanne, and Frances hit the state of FL. The team from Highland went to Punta Gorda and worked with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA). The following year Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans and the surrounding area. Around the world, volunteers and money were directed to New Orleans. Having worked in FL, Highland received a letter requesting that they return. Typical of disaster relief, funds and volunteers were following the news and not returning to FL. Families and homes in FL were still in need of rebuilding. Highland returned for two more years to help rebuild.

This year, Highland is going to New Orleans to help with Katrina relief. They will work with the PDA. They will be housed at the Jefferson Presbyterian Church in Jefferson, LA. There will be 20 on the team this year. Many have been part of the Mission Work Team since Highland's first trip following Hurricane Andrew in 1994. For some it will be their first mission work experience. The team members begin the week as individuals, bringing a variety of gifts and skills. By the end of the week, they will be a team that has been connected by their experience. They will have traveled and worked together; prayed and held daily devotions and shared stories with each other, their host church, and the families of New Orleans.

As Lent begins, many churches encourage their congregations to give to One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS). As disasters happen throughout the year, OGHS funds are there to offer help immediately. Keep the Highland mission team in your prayers as they once again reach out to help others. And when you have the opportunity to give to OGHS, give generously that people may recover, rebuild, and rejoice!

## Looking for a position?

**Cedar Grove is searching for an Interim Pastor**—To begin a conversation about this, call Wendy Gross at 717-314-1034 or email: WendyJWT@aol.com

**First, Phoenixville seeks Worship & Praise Team Leader**—The ideal candidate will lead the music and direct our Praise Team during our contemporary Rise & Shine service. This is a salaried, part-time position (approximately 10 hours per week). This is your opportunity to contribute to a loving, growing, and thriving church. Interested musicians should forward their resume to secretaryfpc@comcast.net or mail to: The First Presbyterian Church of Phoenixville, 145 Main Street Phoenixville, PA 19460 RE: Praise Team Leader.

**Unionville seeks a Volunteer Worship Leader**—Part of our purpose as a church is to provide authentic, God-honoring opportunities for worship that are expressive, faithful, and attentive to our local context. At the present time, Unionville Presbyterian Church has two traditional services on Sunday mornings, and we hope to permanently add a new worship experience on Sunday evenings. Our task force has been visiting other area contemporary worship services and praying for God's guidance. Worship teams from other churches have come and led Sunday evening worship for us so that we can see and feel what it is like to worship "at home." It is our prayer that we will be able to lead this worship with our own team once a month with the expectation that the service will evolve to every Sunday evening in God's time. Leadership is key. We are praying for a volunteer who would help UPC birth this new worship experience with the hope that it will evolve into a paid staff position once we are ready to worship on a weekly basis. This is a wonderful opportunity to make your own mark while formulating and creating this new worship experience in

conjunction with Pastor Jen Howat and the task force. If you feel that you are gifted in this area and that God is calling you in our direction please contact Pastor Howat at 610-347-2327 or email her at pastorjen@comcast.net.

**Wayne Presbyterian Church (WPC) seeks Director of Children's Ministries**—WPC is located in the heart of historic Wayne, Pennsylvania. The church's large, active, family-oriented congregation of 2,200 members embraces and shares Christ's ministry through worship, lifelong Christian Education, broad mission outreach, and music in an atmosphere of caring hospitality. We seek an energetic, creative, passionate individual to direct Christian Education, worship, mission, and fellowship programs for children from birth through 5th grade and their families. This individual will work closely with the Director of Children's Music to incorporate music as an integral and inspiring part of the children's programs and with pastoral staff to involve children and families in the worship services of the church. This is a full-time position supported with part-time administrative help. Experience/education in children's ministries and strong communication/organizational skills are required. See CIF #08101.AC0, e-mail epcastleman@earthlink.net, or call Elizabeth Castleman at 610-293-1307.

**Facilities Manager needed at Westminster**—This new, full-time position at Westminster will be responsible for supervision of custodial staff; maintenance of the church buildings, grounds, and equipment; and oversight of HVAC systems. The candidate should have knowledge of building systems and a capability to handle basic electrical, lighting, and plumbing repairs. If you know someone who is qualified and may be interested, email Tom Snyder at tsnyder@westminsterpc.org

## HARD COPY— E-news that's jumped off line!

**Read the story of Lois R. Anderson**, Missionary to Ethiopia and a member of Guinston Presbyterian Church:  
[http://ydr.inyork.com/ci\\_7996660](http://ydr.inyork.com/ci_7996660)

### Awesome Idea! Share your stewardship expenses

Doe Run and Honey Brook churches teamed up for their Stewardship programs for 2008 and realized mutual success! Both churches uses the New Consecration Sunday program on different Sundays in September, but they chose to cater each other's celebration meal in order to save on expenses and join in fellowship!

Honey Brook came to Doe Run on Sept. 9, to provide a bountiful brunch after the Sunday service at which church members committed an additional \$40,000 over the 2007 budget. Doe Run returned the favor by hosting a lasagna lunch on Sept. 30, at which members committed to a \$30,000 increase in their 2008 budget. Both churches saved money in the implementation of their Stewardship campaigns by teaming up. Church members also became friends by working together to increase stewardship in their own congregations. This awesome idea

represents the connectional system at its best!

### ..and your mission experiences!

Little Britain and Chestnut Level just completed a multi-week mission trip to Gulfport, MS to assist the rebuilding program along the coast. These efforts not only build homes and lives in the south, but they also build vital relationships and partnerships in ministry right here in the Presbytery of Donegal. Thank you for sharing these collaborations!

### Women In Ministry to hold retreat!

Women ministering in Donegal have a neat opportunity to gather for a day's retreat on April 3, at Camp Donegal from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Under the combined leadership of Marcia Woodruff and Jennie Clark, the day will be a good time to rejuvenate and re-create. Spread the word to our sisters in ministry and bring a car-pool group. Call Kathy in the office at 717-392-4035 to be on the list for lunch.

## Update on Julie Nichol—Missionary to Kenya

During the Christmas break, Julie Nichol, our missionary in Kenya, spent time getting re-accustomed to some things we all take for granted—such as hot water. Nichol has been in Kenya for more than a year now. The Dialogue first reported on her calling in the September 2006 issue of The Bulletin. Since that time, Nichol has become immersed in the Kenyan culture—if not their hot water; which isn't available on demand as it is here in the states.

Nichol has kept a Blog of her experience, where you can read the chronicle of her changing reactions to the food in Nairobi and learn more about her journey through the process of ministering to Kenyan girls. Teenage girls in Africa are at very high risk for contracting HIV, so Nichol's work there with them is of the utmost importance. Working through the Navigators missionary group, she has been leading teens in studies, such as "Obedience to Christ," while learning more about the Kenyan culture and setting goals for future ministry.

On her Blog, Nichol tells stories of nearly being run down by the car carrying President Kibaki of Kenya, learning to drive on the left side of the road, and discovering a taste for roasted goat. Although she's enjoyed her mom's cooking back in the states over the holidays, there's no question that rice, stew, chapati, and chicken cooked the Kenyan way have joined her favorites. She also developed a great appreciation of the African climate, which was just warming up as we felt November's chill.

Among Nichol's goals for the year was the establishment of a ministry at St George's High School. She was also on the planning

committee for the first Navigators East Africa Regional Students Conference (which took place in early November). Of the Bible study, she told us, "Our first year in the school was not without difficulties, but...it has taught me the importance of bathing my ministry in prayer and perseverance through spiritual warfare."

One of Nichol's many accomplishments was organizing a 12-day Expo—an annual event for high school graduates. Nichol dedicated herself to the finance post and experienced the blessing of ending the year with a surplus. In spite of meeting these challenges, it is in the ways she has seen God move that Nichol feels she has made an impact.

"But honestly, the time when I feel most excited about what God is doing is in the very small things that almost nobody sees," she told *The Dialogue*. "A young woman in the ministry confided in me about suicidal thoughts that she had been having for years, and I have been able to walk with her through that and watch her heal and claim God's promises and truth for her life."

The changing of one life through God's grace is surely reward enough, but Nichol saw much more during her time in Kenya.

"Others' eyes have been quietly opened to the reality of God's amazing grace and forgiveness. Others have made deeper commitments to sexual purity...not just because they are following a list of rules, but because they have understood God's design for marriage and wish to pursue holiness in their lives." Nichol is now reflecting over where God has led her in the last year and what His plans for her future are. You can read her Blog at <http://kenyareflections.blogspot.com>.

