

DONEGAL *Dialogue*

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CONNECTIONS: Multi-culturalism in Donegal Presbytery

By Nan Best

Culture is the aspect in our lives formed by our customs, traditions, and ideas. The United States of America is a nation that encompasses all varieties of culture. We hear and see it in languages, holidays, dress, customs, even in motivations. In a decade or two, other races and ethnicities will be in the majority, and the Euro-Americans the minority of our population.

The Task Force on Immigrant Ministry has begun to look for folks living among us who have come from different cultures. A goal of the Task Force is to raise our awareness of those from other places who are not like ourselves. This includes reaching out to our own existing ethnic fellowships: Oromo, La Iglesia, and Resurrection Chapel. How rich to have Latino, Ethiopian, and Haitian brothers and sisters in Donegal. Yet, we believe there are others in our communities who long for Christian fellowship and worship. So we pray: Lord, help us in Donegal to see and welcome other brothers and sisters who have a different cultural background.

For many congregations, there is no one from Burma, Sudan, Philippines, or even Mexico who lives close by. That closes us to the possibility of practicing acceptance or embracing "the different ones." Indeed there are always "different ones," culturally, with whom we can connect...homeless, those who use poor grammar, those with strange haircuts, illiterates, physically or mentally challenged...you name others in your neighborhood. Actually how often am I the "different one" to someone else?

Recently I heard a bias against a young man from off the street who came into worship wearing a baseball cap, which he didn't remove. Neither did he stand when the congregation did.

"He needs to change so we can genuinely welcome him" was the implication. How often does that attitude stifle the love of Jesus Christ from reaching others?

The Task Force is spreading "Living the Vision" booklets and DVDs throughout Donegal's congregations. When you are asked to use these, have a group in your church view the short DVD and then have a discussion time. Will you spend an hour to begin to think about how we might connect with other cultures?

Transformation toward embracing others begins when our hearts are changed. We are sent by Christ into the world in his name. Let's connect with the variety of peoples who are being sent to us.



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The Year of Re-Connecting!

By Charlie Gross

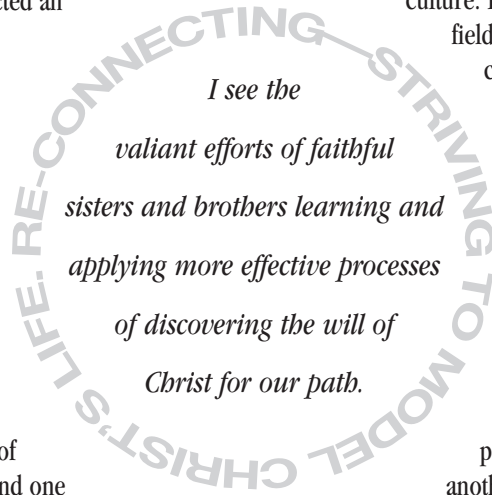
We are on an exciting, Spirit-filled adventure as a presbytery! Upon receiving the comprehensive Transition Team report, we put together a talented team to implement it and elected an executive search committee. Furthermore, in December, your Council met with this Implementation Team and the Executive Search Committee to build relationships and trust and to seek ways of “re-connecting” as a presbytery.

Re-connecting with God, with one another, with our churches, with God’s Word, with honesty, trust, and transparency are the goals. Truly, “We are seeking a clearer and better defined understanding of our identity” (p.21 of transition team report). Over and over, throughout the presbytery, I am seeing evidence of presbyters striving to hear one another, understand one another, love one another, come together in new ways, and stay in the conversation.

I see intentionality in “re-connecting.” I am seeing evidence of a “striving to model Christ’s life” in our current context and culture. I see a growing, greater response to the mission field, to discernment practices, and to spirited conversational groups. I see the hard, adaptive work of “re-connecting.”

I know that we sometimes feel that we are deep in the wilderness in this adventure, but I am extremely hopeful! I am hopeful because I see the valiant efforts of faithful sisters and brothers learning and applying more effective processes of discovering the will of Christ for our path. Processes that will re-connect us with the Sovereign, Triune God, and processes that will re-connect us with one another in deeper ways. Yes, I am hopeful! I pray a

Happy New Year of Re-Connecting for you and, of course, extravagant blessings for 2009!



The Donegal Digest

Bellevue (W. Davies)—Back in early December when we were all just starting to really think about Christmas, Bellevue was holding a youth family holiday lunch of deep fried turkey and side dishes and desserts provided by the attendees. The event gave youth and their families a chance to celebrate with Bellevue’s new youth pastor.

Covenant (Dr. J. Moyer)—Covenant has several activities designed to encourage members and friends including the Taize Service, which is a short, meditative worship that allows attendees to take a break from the hassles of everyday life to enjoy candles, scripture, prayer, instrumental music, and silence. LIFT, which involves women of the church who meet each Monday morning for fellowship and spirited exchange, celebrated its annual Christmas brunch in December.

First Church, York (Dr. J. Morgan)—The youth are already preparing for the Feast of St. Valentine with a dinner theater event. The play is Knight Moves, and all proceeds support the youth group.

First Church, West Chester (Dr. W. Hess)—During the month of January, the church hosts a homeless shelter run by the West Chester Area Homeless Single Women’s Shelter Task Force. The Task Force hopes to soon add a second floor to their facility, but until that happens, area churches take turns sheltering the women during the coldest months. Women of the church volunteer to help while the shelter is located at First, West Chester.

Honey Brook (W. Wisneski, Interim)—A live walk-thru Nativity was part of the church’s Christmas celebration for three Fridays in December. The walk-thru took attendees from Isaiah to the empty cross with the goal of bringing them a new appreciation for Christ’s sacrifice for each of us.

Paoli (Dr. R. Larson)—During a fall Serve Day, Paoli sent members of the church into the community to perform local missions work and spread the gospel. Members and friends of the congregation gave four hours or more of time to rake, clean, prune, sweep, garden, move, and more.

Trinity (Dr. W. Wilkins)—Christmas baskets were created as an outreach for Caring Cupboard families. Members and friends of the church donated turkeys to be put in the baskets, which are packed by volunteers. The families also receive Christmas presents from a group called Santa’s Brigade.

Unionville (J. Howat)—A grief support ministry for those who have been touched by death or long-term illness has begun meeting on Thursday evenings. The group is facilitated by a hospice chaplain and bereavement counselor.

Wrightsville (C. Blackford)—Acknowledging that not everyone may feel merry during the holidays, Wrightsville holds a Blue Christmas service. This gathering is designed to lift up hearts from sadness and hold on to the hope of God with the goal of beginning a journey toward wholeness.

SPOTLIGHT ON The Rev. Dr. Raymond Larson

As of November 1, 2008, Paoli Presbyterian Church has a new transition pastor:

The Rev. Dr. Raymond J. Larson, came to Paoli after serving as Interim at First Presbyterian in Davenport, Iowa, where he was described as both candid and effective.

Larson earned his Master of Divinity degree from United Theological Seminary in New Brighton, Minnesota. He received his Doctor of Ministry from Union Presbyterian School of Christian Education, Richmond, Virginia. During his career, Larson has served in a variety of churches and traveled internationally to Israel, Colombia, and Guatemala on mission trips.

The transition pastor search committee became interested in Larson because of his desire to serve a large church that has clear expectations but is looking to change in a constructive manner. His commitment to the interim process, listening ability, and knowledge of how to foster relationships, along with his understanding of conflict management, all contributed to his being chosen.

Larson was drawn to the church by what he calls “a gentle sense of providence.” He predicts that in his ministry he will listen and help the church to deal with its pain and emotions in the grace of God’s mercy.

Help wanted

First Presbyterian Church, Strasburg, seeks a part-time Director of Christian Education for children and youth. Application packets may be obtained by calling 717-687-6030 or e-mailing straspres@straspres.org.

Paoli Presbyterian Church is seeking a part-time Church Business Administrator (CBA). We are looking for a part-time Church Business Administrator to join our leadership team at Paoli Presbyterian Church. The Church Business Administrator provides strategic leadership, oversight, and support in the areas of finance, facilities, and information technology. This position focuses on the management of processes, policies, and procedures needed in these main areas to support the church and its ministries. The Church Administrator will work under the supervision of the Senior Pastor/Head of Staff, participate regularly in staff meetings, and coordinate with other church programs and related staff. Educational Background required: Bachelor's degree in business administration and/or finance. Preferred: advanced education and/or credentials in area of church or non-profit organization, with at least 5 years direct experience in similar positions. Salary competitive; 20-25 hours per week; Exempt—Vacation: refer to policy—2 weeks. Contact Dr. Jack Felch, 610-644-8250, jack.felch@paolipres.org



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

Experience the Presbytery of Donegal Virtual University!

Check out the educational resources, and, send Charlie your own links, blogs, videos, and podcasts, to help raise the bar of ministry! Visit <http://donegaluniversity.org>.

Consider Coaching Your Innovative Potential by engaging one of our coaches!

Learn more about our developing coaching capacity at: <http://www.charliegross.com/charliecreativity29.mp3>

Download this four-minute podcast and play with Windows Media Player or go to the iTunes store and search for Charlie's Creativity Podcast and get the latest episode.

Walt Mueller has opened the Center for Parent/Youth

Understanding at <https://www.cpyu.org/Default.aspx>. Here's a place for those seeking to understand and impact youth culture—an area the transition team report labeled for growth.

Want to pump up your evangelism style? Check out the resources at: <http://www.evangelismcoach.org>. Start a conversation about faith, life, and culture.

Turning to One Another: simple conversations to restore hope to the future from Margaret Wheatley's book is the subject of Charlie's 6 minute podcast on the power of conversation. Visit <http://www.charliegross.com/charliecreativity30.mp3> to learn more.

The Perspectives on the World Christian Movement course has helped give new direction to hundreds of thousands of people since its inception in 1973. Created for those seeking to be full-time missionaries, Perspectives has developed into a transforming experience that helps those who attend to discover the full purpose and plan God has for their lives. This exciting class will be offered in East Earl, PA, at the Weaverland Mennonite Church (near Shady Maple) on Thursday evenings from January 15 to May 7, 2009. Sample the first class free of charge. For more information visit www.perspectives.org and find the East Earl Class or contact Aden Stoltzfus at wilmaden@peoplepc.com or 610-942-9888.

To learn about Undergraduate Educational Scholarships, Graduate Scholarships, and Grant Applications available from the 2009 Synod of the Trinity's Grants and Scholarship Committee:

The information is available online at either of these web pages:
<http://www.syntrinity.org/Programs/ScholarshipsGrantsLoan.htm> or
http://www.syntrinity.org/home/news/2009-10_Scholarships_Available.htm or by calling the Synod Office. Application deadline is April 30, 2009.

2009 Mission Yearbook for Prayer and Study are now available at the presbytery office. Cost is \$5.00. If you order them directly from PDA now, the cost will be \$9.25 per copy for

1 to 9 copies, plus shipping; \$8.00 per copy for 10 to 24 copies, plus shipping. If you didn't get yours and you want some, please give us a call 717-392-4035 or email kathy@donegalpby.com.

Third National Pastors' Sabbath will take place at the Sawgrass Marriott Resort and Spa located in Ponte Vedra Beach near Jacksonville, Florida. Known as "the ultimate meeting retreat," the resort offers 350 acres of lakes and ponds. The dates are April 17-20, 2009. Lodging at the resort is only \$119/night. Read more at www.pcusa.org/pastorsabbath. Questions? Contact the GA Meeting Service at (888)728-7228, ext. 2417 or at gameetingservice@pcusa.org.

Mission Committees who want to help build the church at Samate should check out the Web site at <http://www.donegalpby.com/churchbuilding.php>. The church of about 500, which is located in Ethiopia, is half complete, and \$28,000 is needed to finish construction. Still needed are a floor, doors, window glass, paint, lighting, pews, and a ceiling. If a church mission committee would like to purchase any of the necessary parts to help complete the whole church, please contact Tom Milligan at lbpc@littlebritainchurch.org.

The Summer 2009 Mission trip to Honduras from June 21-27 will cost a total of \$1,371 per person. For more information, contact Steven C. Mentzer, Central American Relief Efforts, at 717-203-4942 or ssmentzer@comcast.net or visit <http://www.carelief.org>.

2009 IRS mileage rates will be 55 cents per mile for business miles driven, 24 cents per mile driven for medical or moving purposes, and 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations.

Books of Order for 2007-2009 can be purchased from the presbytery office at a cost of \$8.00 each. Please contact Kathy at kathy@donegalpby.com or call 717-392-4035.

Do you know a family in need of a home? Habitat for Humanity of Chester County is currently building in both the Borough of West Chester and Coatesville, and they are in search of qualified families. Habitat requires an annual income between \$22,000 and \$55,000. If you, or someone you know, are interested in becoming a homeowner through Habitat, please contact Deanna Weiss at 610-384-7993 x14 or e-mail deanna@hfcc.org.

Enjoy reading the Dialogue? Fill out the Presbytery Communications Survey at: <http://www.donegalpby.com/csoc08v2.pdf> Complete it, save it, and then email it to Charlie at: cwgross@gmail.com.