



Autumn 2017 Edition

From the President:

During these fall months, any number of issues will claim our attention as pertaining to our duties and responsibilities in, and to, Church and society. One of these issues is the political races in certain states of our nation. When these races are over, millions of dollars would have been spent. Travel and speeches of candidates vying for positions would have added up to countless hours. Further, sheets of paper, placards and brochures utilized in promoting candidates would weigh tons. There will be jubilation on the part of winners and their supporters. Conversely, there will be disappointment and depression on the part of losers and their supporters.

Secondly, so far as the Church is concerned, much time will be spent in making preparation for next year. This will include developing programs for all areas of congregations; electing and appointing members to serve therein; and building budgets commensurate with the said programs. It goes without saying, in order for

the projected programs to be implemented, enough committed people need to be involved.

Attempting to entangle Jesus was nothing new to him. Pharisees, being involved, were no stranger to our Lord. Hallelujah! In each occasion, he proved equal to the challenge. On a particular attempt, the law and politics were utilized.

Jesus took the intent of evil spirited people and converted it into an immortal teaching discourse. He gave them, and God's people throughout eternity, a divine lesson in duties and responsibilities. Let us hear it anew. "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

The lesson our Lord would have us to remember is, in our rendering, never render to one at the expense of the other, or a substitute for the other. Those who are supporting candidates, and

participating in other ways in political arenas, are to be commended, especially those who are doing such with the welfare of people in mind. However, they should do for, and give to, the Church of Jesus Christ with the same enthusiasm and generosity as they do and give in political arenas. Doing so in this spirit is being responsible sons and daughters of God.

I urge all of us to:

- Go out and vote
- Be involved in our communities
- Pray, and then commit our services to the Church of Jesus Christ
- Pray, and then make financial pledges to the mission of Jesus Christ through His Church
- Keep those areas that are devastated by hurricanes, and everywhere where
- God's people are experiencing inhumane treatment from any source.

May God's richest benediction be upon us as we seek to serve in society and in the Church of Jesus Christ.

*George M. Wilson, President
Presbytery of the Peaks, NBPC*

Something to Ponder!

“Violence Has Brought Us Here”

As we collectively peer, yet again, into the abyss that is hatred for those who are different, I confess that I am cast into a weary and almost reclusive silence. I know that my words are insufficient to express the pain of those who are similarly wearied. They are certainly insufficient to express the horror we all feel for those who have lost their lives diving into the abyss with

the hope of conquering, or at the very least, containing it. After all the speeches that I and others more eloquent than I have written and spoken, the darkness churns. Perhaps even more furiously from all the effort wielded against it. The words I have left are pale imitations of the prophet Habakkuk: “O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? Or cry to you ‘Violence!’ and you will not save?”

It is the violence that has brought us here. The violence of hating others because they are different. The violence that comes from idolizing symbols in divisive and dangerous ways. The violence that comes from using those symbols as a pretense to foment hatred and sow discontent as if both were protected ideals of our body politic.

The dangerous and excluding visions of groups like the KKK, neo-Nazis, and other white supremacists threaten violence both spiritual and physical. That violence and its effect has robbed Charlottesville of its sense of peace and security, taken Heather Heyer from all of us, and resulted in the deaths of Lieutenant H. Jay Cullen and Trooper Berke M.M. Bates. We can hope that Heather's mother, Susan Bro, was right when she said at Heather's memorial service: “They tried to kill my child to shut her up. Well, guess what? You just magnified her.”

We can hope that the continuing spirit to resist the type of evil that marched in Charlottesville last weekend is indeed magnified in each of us as we talk together, pray together, and seek together the vision that Martin Luther King, Jr. so often called the beloved community. We must raise our voices even when we think we have little to say. We must move our political representatives even when they seem reluctant to move. We must stand when it comes our turn to stand.

At present, it is our turn to stand with the people of Charlottesville. They have been hard pressed by the evil of bigotry and racism that forced itself upon their community. Such evil is neither lethargic nor stationary. It will no doubt wander its way energetically into more cities and more

lives within the near future. When it does, we must do all we can in the face of it to represent the light of God's love as that love was expressed in the ministry and resurrection of a man who went out of his way to touch, heal, teach, revive and resurrect people from every gender, ethnic, racial, diseased, differently-abled and differently-positioned station in life. Directly, through the movement of God's Presence that surely is at work, and responsively, through the words and actions of God's people, I trust that the light of that love is even now, despite how it looks, coming into the world. Bathed in that light I feel a spiritual energy that transforms my weariness into a new and even more fervent resolve. It is such a transfiguration of weariness into work that King spoke of when, in 1955, he addressed a congregation preparing themselves for the Montgomery Bus Boycott. "And you know, my friends, there comes a time when people get tired of being trampled over by the iron feet of oppression. There comes a time, my friends, when people get tired of being plunged across the abyss of humiliation, where they experience the bleakness of nagging despair. There comes a time when a people get tired of being pushed out of the glittering sunlight of life's July and left standing amid the piercing chill of an alpine November. There comes a time." Seems to me like, in Charlottesville and across our country, that time is just about now.

Rev. Brian K. Blount is President and Professor of New Testament in the Walter W. Moore and Charles E.S. Kraemer Presidential Chairs at Union Presbyterian Seminary.

Stated Clerk urges Presbyterians to back greater refugee resettlement

LETTER COMES AS PRESIDENT TRUMP SETS LOWEST ADMISSIONS IN HISTORY SEPTEMBER 29, 2017



Office of the General Assembly Communications

LOUISVILLE

**From J. Herbert Nelson II
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly**

Dear Members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),

For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, ¹⁸who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. ¹⁹You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. -- Deuteronomy 10:17-19

We received news that President Trump has set the number of refugee admissions at 45,000 – the lowest number since 1980 when the Refugee Act created the Refugee Resettlement program in this country. Presently, we are faced with the largest humanitarian crisis of displaced persons in our human history with approximately 65 million people forced from their homes due to violence, disaster, and war. Of that number, 21 million are refugees, seeking safety in a foreign land knowing they can no longer find protection in their country of origin. The people of the United States have witnessed their needs and opened their arms. Even

before the refugee resettlement mechanism was established within the U.S. federal government more than 35 years ago, churches threw open their doors. They were the faithful to come forward, living out God's law to "execute justice for the orphan and the widow, and love the strangers, providing them food and clothing" (NRSV Deut. 10:18). Refugee ministry is a bright light in our own Presbyterian history.

However, we forget that our ancestral history includes peoples who were strangers in a strange land. We forget that we follow a Christ child who fled his country, seeking refugee from a King demanding his death. We forget that we are loved by a God who calls us children.

We trace our roots to John Calvin, himself a refugee. He understood the need to reach out to vulnerable communities. He knew their plight. He knew they were the strangers who needed refuge. We must remember that history.

Today we mourn the President's decision. However, tomorrow we stand again. We can reach out to local, national, and international resettlement agencies providing the funding and volunteer support needed to keep these organizations afloat as they provide necessary services. We can mobilize and lift our voices to our elected officials so they are reminded that we are a nation that receives the most vulnerable and knows the value of choosing welcome. May we be inspired by the Deuteronomic scripture and be reminded how to love those who face unthinkable obstacles. May we rethink how we support and sustain the ministries that reach these communities. Let us be a part of the work that brings light in the midst of fear, worry, and at times desperation. There are still many in this country who believes welcoming the refugee is integral to who we are as people of faith. You can continue to be a prophetic voice of solidarity by joining efforts to press elected officials to reconsider the cap on refugee admissions. Let us not accept disappointment

but work for change. It is together that transformative love can be revealed.

In the Faith We Share,



“What’s Happening Around the Peaks”

2017 Church Development and Transformation Conference

Thursday, Oct. 26, 2017

**9:30 - 3:00
(Registration will open at 9:00)**

**Presbytery of the Peaks Office
1022 Floyd St, Ste. A
Lynchburg, VA 24501**

**Keynote Speaker: Rev. Dr. Ann
Philbrick**

Registration is now open online.

**Registration will close Tuesday, Oct.24 at
12:00 p.m.**

Goals of the Seminar:

Educate Leaders in the Presbytery in the language of “transformation” and understanding models of small church “transformation”

Raise awareness of issues with New
Worshipping Communities, New Church
Developments and Church
Development/Redevelopment/Transformation

Creating a conversation about what is a vital,
viable congregation and how do we (the
Presbytery) lead or keep the conversation going?

About the Speaker:

Ann was born and raised in suburban
Philadelphia. She grew up in the Bryn Mawr
Presbyterian Church where she was baptized,
confirmed, and eventually ordained to the
Ministry of Word and Sacrament. She went to
college in New York and North Carolina,
received her Master of Divinity degree from
Princeton and later her Doctor of Ministry
degree from McCormick. She has served
churches in Madison, WI and Carnegie, PA;
served on presbytery staffs in Washington DC
and Baltimore, MD; did consulting for 8 years
before serving on the national level of our
denomination as Associate for Vital
Congregations. She is currently back to doing
independent consulting and coaching

Presbytery of the Peaks Meeting:

November 16, 2017,

9:00am to 4:00pm

Blacksburg Presbyterian Church

701 Church Street SE

Blacksburg, VA 24060

Mizpah Presbyterian Church

On November 5, 2017, Mizpah P.C. will be
celebrating its 127th Anniversary during its 11
o'clock service with Rev. George M Wilson
delivering the Anniversary sermon.

Fifth Ave. Presbyterian Church

The 125th Church Anniversary will
culminate at its grand Homecoming
Celebration will take place on
November 5, 2017 during its 11 o'clock
service with a dinner to following the
service at the church. The newly
appointed pastor, Rev. Vernie L. Bolden
Jr., will deliver the Homecoming
sermon.

Fifth Avenue P.C. was featured on the CBS
Sunday Morning Show on September 10, 2017.
If you missed it, try this link to watch it:
<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/stonewall-jackson-church-window-memorialized-confederate-monuments-roanoke/>

Don't forget!

POP Black Caucus Meeting

October 7, 2017, 11:00am

**Grace Presbyterian Church
Martinsville , VA**



Next Date for receiving information for the

newsletter is:

[November 30, 2017](#)

Send information to:

Joyce A. Bolden

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Phone: 540-345-8432

Please do not send PDF files!



Peace & Blessings!