

******July 2017 Notes from the Presbytery of Nevada******
Presbytery Pastor Hilda Pecoraro

Prayers for Independence Day – Happy 4th of July!

Almighty God,
 You have given us this good land as our heritage.
 Make us always remember your generosity and constantly do your will.
 Bless our land with honest industry, sound learning, and an honorable way of life.
 Save us from violence, discord, and confusion;
 from pride and arrogance, and from every evil way.
 Make us who come from many nations with many different languages a united people.
 Defend our liberties
 and give those whom we have entrusted with the authority of government
 the spirit of wisdom, that there might be justice and peace in our land.
 When times are prosperous, let our hearts be thankful;
 and, in troubled times, do not let our trust in you fail.
 We ask all this through Jesus Christ our Lord.
 Amen.

(Source: Book of Common Worship, PC(USA) p. 816)

Lord God Almighty,
 in whose Name the founders of this country won liberty for themselves and for us,
 and lit the torch of freedom for nations then unborn:
 Grant that we and all the people of this land may have grace to maintain our liberties in
 righteousness and peace;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord,
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, for ever and ever.
 Amen.

(Source: 1979 Book of Common Prayer, Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA)

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Midsummer Lunch and Gathering for Southern Nevada Pastors

All Presbytery of Nevada pastors in southern Nevada are invited to a Clergy Lunch and Gathering on Thursday, July 6, 2017, 12:00-2:00 p.m. at Henderson Presbyterian Church (601 N. Major Henderson, NV 89015).

We will meet in the Fireside Room. Lunch will be provided, followed by a time of fellowship and sharing.

Please RSVP by **July 3, 2017** to Presbytery Pastor Hilda Pecoraro by email hilda50@cox.net or by phone 702-610-7123. (Spouses are welcome to attend – let me know when you RSVP!) Looking forward to a great time of fellowship!

Pastors, Are You Making Use of Your Study Leave?

One of the most important aspects of self-care to maintain spiritual health as well as enthusiasm and freshness in ministry is Study Leave. I know it is not always easy to find an appropriate event that you can afford, but the benefits are huge – for pastors and congregations. I will do my best to post opportunities I learn about for personal and professional growth and renewal. Here are a few examples of Study Leave opportunities used by some of our pastors:

Zephyr Point – Preaching Pastors Retreats (2017 dates: May 1-3 and October 2-4)
Autumn Celtic Prayer Retreat (November 3-5) <http://www.zephyrpoint.org>

Sacramento, CA – “The Power of Presence: Authorization and De-Authorization in the Helping Professions” August 11-13, 2017 (This conference is offered to us by the **Rev. Ed Luckett**)

This will be an intensive, residential conference intended to expand your awareness and deepen your capacity to provide care.

The conference is experiential in nature. This simply means that people learn from their experience by being in groups of various sizes and compositions and it requires participants’ active participation. Over three days we will create a temporary learning organization offering an opportunity to notice how we function in groups and the institutions in which we work—without the pressures and politics of the actual workplace. In this unique environment, insights can be developed that help increase our influence and effectiveness.

The Power of Presence is co-sponsored by the Nautilus Pacific Chapter of the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (CPSP) and Grex, the West Coast affiliate of the A. K. Rice Institute for the Study of Social Systems.

Some of the Likely Topics for Reflection and Learning:

How in my role do I affect individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions that I work in? How do they, in turn, impact me and my ability to stay in role?

What are the boundaries in the helping relationship?

Where do I get the authority to do my work? Who and what de-authorizes me?

How do presence and power relate?

What is my experience of leading and following?

How are the human needs to belong and connect manifest in the complex environments in which we work?

Who Should Attend?

The conference provides an opportunity to step back and reflect, to be present to ourselves and to the work matrix we are part of. It is an invaluable experience for all helping professionals, including but not limited to: pastoral care workers, nurses, doctors, social workers, teachers, counselors, police officers, people in non-profit organizations and many others.

More Info...

For more information about the conference, contact the Administrator, **Ed Luckett Jr.**, at npandgrex@gmail.com or by telephone at 702-738-0589.

Board of Pensions (www.pensions.org) – Well-Being Retreat

*“Step away from daily work to examine wholeness through the spiritual, health, financial, and vocational areas of your life at [Zephyr Point Presbyterian Conference Center](#), in Lake Tahoe, Nevada, on **Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, August 21, 22, and 23.***

Well-Being Retreat — hosted by Board University in partnership with the Presbyterian Foundation and its subsidiary, New Covenant Trust Company — offers a number of enhancements for 2017:

- *Participation is now open to ALL active and retired Benefits Plan members, along with their spouses and survivors.*
- *For those arriving early, a community-building service project is planned for Monday morning.*
- *While many of the most popular workshops and speakers will be returning for Well-Being Retreat 2017, exciting new workshops have been added, including Spiritual Direction — The Who, What, Where, When, and Why; Your “Conflict” Script and How To Change It; Emotion as Motion; The Core of Building Confidence; The Story of Our Lives: What Will Our Legacy Be?; Finishing Well: Healthcare Decisions at the End of Life; and Understanding Stewardship in Racial and Ethnic Communities.*
- *Attendees may register, at no cost, for individualized spiritual direction — “an encounter that explores a deeper relationship with the spiritual aspect of being human.” (sdiworld.org)*
- *Active Benefits Plan members and covered spouses can earn Call to Health points for attending.*

In addition, the Board is delighted to welcome the Reverend Dr. Cleophus J. LaRue Jr., the Francis Being Retreat’s opening and closing worship services.

Learn more in the pensions.org article [Registration Now Open: Well-Being Retreat 2017](#). Or visit [Well-Being Retreat](#) at pensions.org for more information, including registration details, links to the program agenda, speaker profiles, and frequently asked questions.

*There’s still time to reserve your spot, but space is limited. Don’t miss out! **Registration for Well-Being Retreat 2017 closes July 31.*** (copied from Board of Pensions website: www.pensions.org)

West Coast Presbyterian Pastors Conference – Mount Hermon Conference Center, April 9-13, 2018
For information: <http://www.wcppc.org>

Update on 222nd General Assembly Amendments

Dear **Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Commissioned Lay Pastors and Elders,**

Yes, everything old is new again! We are no longer using the titles Teaching Elder, Commissioned Ruling Elder and Ruling Elder. Quoting from an article in the June 19, 2017 [Presbyterian Outlook](#), “All 16 constitutional amendments proposed by the 222nd Assembly were approved by the presbyteries by large margins. The new provisions will take effect on June 25, 2017 – one year from the adjournment of the assembly.” For more information see **Rev. Christy Ramsey’s** article on the Presbytery of Nevada website (www.nevadapresbytery.org) or keep reading!

The following article was posted on the PC(USA) website by **Jerry Van Marter** of the OGA Communications Office on April 10, 2017:

All sixteen constitutional amendments proposed by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have received the 86 affirmative votes from among the 170 presbyteries needed for ratification.

The new provisions will take effect on **June 25, 2017**—one year from the adjournment of the assembly that proposed them. Presbyteries have until that date to vote on the proposals and are encouraged to do so.

The amendments (*descriptions provided by the Association of Stated Clerks*) and the voting tallies as of **April 10, 2017**:

- 16-A: to require all councils to adopt and implement a child and youth protection policy. (107-3)
- 16-B: to create flexibility in filling the membership of committees above the session by not requiring “at least one-half being members of congregations,” instead requiring “in numbers as nearly equal as possible.” (98-11)
- 16-C.1–8: to change ordered ministry titles back to their form before the *Book of Order* was amended in 2014—“teaching elder” changed back to “minister of the Word and Sacrament”; “ruling elder” changed back to “elder”; and “commissioned ruling elder” changed back to “commissioned lay pastor.” The eight amendments change this wording in eight different places in the Constitution.
- 16-C.1. (98-12)
- 16-C.2. (98-12)
- 16-C.3. (99-11)
- 16-C.4. (98-12)
- 16-C.5. (98-12)
- 16-C.6. (88-22)
- 16-C.7. (95-15)
- 16-C.8. (98-12)
- 16-D.1: to remove a permanent ban—the result of a 2014 amendment to G-2.0509—on teaching elders who had renounced jurisdiction while in the disciplinary process from working in or for a church under the jurisdiction of the PC(USA) in either a paid or volunteer position. The new provision removes this restriction by requiring the former teaching elder to rejoin the church and to resubmit to the original disciplinary process. (86-22)
- 16-D.2: to remove any statute of limitations regarding the alleged prior offense cited in 16-D.1. (87-21)
- “handbook.” (108-1)
- 16-F: to add the phrase “caring for God’s creation” to the “Ministry of Members” listed in G-1.0304. (104-5)
- 16-G: to make the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper available to developing Christians who have not yet made the baptismal declaration. (97-3)
- 16-H: to replace the current Directory for Worship with a new Directory for Worship. (94-6)

Around the Presbytery

*Our thoughts and prayers are with the family of **Elder Marge Weckerly**, a long-time member of St. John's Presbyterian Church. Marge went to be with the Lord on May 10, 2017. She was an active member of the Presbytery of Nevada serving as a Commissioner and as a member of the Committee on Ministry. A Memorial Service was held at St. John's on June 3, 2017.

***Congratulations** to the **Rev. Vernon Towne** on the **50th** anniversary of his Ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church. Vernon has faithfully served as a military Chaplain, Associate Pastor, Pastor and Head of Staff, touching many lives with his ministry. He has been an active member of the Presbytery of Nevada since 1999. We celebrate this milestone anniversary with Vernon and his wife, Dr. Margaret Towne. God's blessings for many more years of serving our Lord Jesus Christ and his Church.

*Continued prayers for those who had surgeries during the month of June: **Rev. Jim Houston-Hencken, Rev. Bill Stryker and Karen Dahlen** (wife of Pastor Carl Dahlen). Let us continue to keep these friends in our prayers, along with others who continue to regain full health and strength following surgeries and health challenges.

Something New for Your Consideration

I recently received the following letter regarding an innovative resource for congregations. Having received a "thumbs up" from Council, I would like to pass along the following letter from the **Rev. Brad Munroe**, Presbytery Pastor, Grand Canyon and de Cristo Presbyteries in Arizona.

Dear Rev. Pecoraro,

There's an exciting thing happening in my Presbytery I'd like to let you know about because I need you to forward this letter around to others in your presbytery, if you are willing. I don't normally reach out about ministries like this, but this one is both truly unique yet requires an economy of scale such that multiple presbyteries are needed to make it fly.

Last year, we ordained Robert Felix to serve the church and the world through film, and to create a ministry called Lights to make films which share the Gospel in words and images - he calls them "visual sermons" (see: www.lightsministry.com, click on "watch" and "FAQ"). Robert is a bi-vocational pastor whose other work is with Dixiletta Moving Pictures where he is a filmmaker as well as a gifted preacher! The Lights ministry launched in January and is assembling a cohort of 60-70 congregations that will participate, (which is why we need multiple presbyteries to create an economy of scale). Beginning on its target launch date of September 15, 2017, Lights will deliver one visual sermon per month to cohort members.

Several churches in the Presbytery of Grand Canyon are taking part because the ministry offers some benefits:

- It provides a **thoroughly Reformed message** through visuals more often seen in commercial films;
- In testing with Anglo, Hispanic and Native American congregations, people of **all ages and backgrounds** have responded with enthusiastic support;
- It gives **solo pastors** a way to spend more time doing all the other things pastors do, gives **churches without pastors** a consistent, quality, Reformed message once a

month, and gives **multi-staff churches** a flexible resource for all manner of alternative programming;

- It enables congregations of all sizes to access up-to-date, refined media at an **affordable cost**; and
- The films are **reusable in many other settings**, from retreats and classes to outreach events.

If you can picture any of your churches benefitting from Lights, *please forward this letter to them so they can watch the first few minutes of the film, “The Veil,” and explore the FAQ* . If you see the opportunity I see for creative ministry, I recommend you get in touch with Robert directly about visiting and possibly holding a screening in your Presbytery. We used “The Veil” as a sermon during our Presbytery worship gathering and had Robert talk about the vision for Lights, which worked very well. He has screened it in many congregations, all of whom had very positive responses. You can reach him at robert@dixiletta.com or 602-374-6966.

After talking with Robert, a graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary and film producer, I learned the following details:

- Sermons will arrive monthly as a Blu-ray disc. At a minimum, churches would need a Blu-ray player and Large screen TV.
- Churches sign a “license” that they will only use the sermons within their own congregations.
- Cost: similar to Pulpit Supply. Charge is \$1.00/person in congregation + \$50.00. Minimum monthly fee is \$100.00.
- By the beginning of August hoping to have around 70 churches make a six-month commitment (fund production of the first series).
- Sermons are topical – not lectionary based.