

AVENEWS

Newsletter of THE NEW YORK AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Washington, DC

Congratulations! NYAPC Honored by BID

by Cathy Schultheis

The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church was honored recently with a Downtown DC Business Improvement District (BID) 2014 Momentum Award for its efforts to make Downtown an amazing place to live, work and play.



According to Downtown DC BID, the church's recent \$1 million exterior renovation has created a rich and vibrant experience for downtown residents, workers and guests. When interviewed by BID, Dr. Gench stated that ". . . just because we're a justice-seeking ministry, doesn't mean we have to look shabby. . ." and that the church renovation "is a reflection about ourselves and what we feel about our ministry. . . our care for the city." Dr. Gench affirmed the work being done as an "opportunity to make the church look move lively" and to better serve as a beacon in the community it serves.

The reception and awards program was held on December 4 at the Carnegie Library. Rev. Linda Lader, Hal Hiemstra and Dawn Hill, Wilson and Kris Golden, and John and Cathy Schultheis were present to see Dr. Gench receive the award on behalf of the church. It was a joyous and exciting experience.

Staff Comings and Goings

by Edith Snyder

Hello — Please welcome Janet L. Maheras to the church staff as NYAPC's staff accountant. Jan began work on January 26, immediately jumping into efforts to close out the church's 2014 books. Jan replaces Angela Armstrong, who left the role of church financial officer just before Thanksgiving.

Jan will work closely throughout 2015 with Your Part-Time Controller (YPTC), the outside accounting firm the Trustees and the Accounting Task Force have engaged, and specifically with YPTC's Daniel Ianni, to revamp financial management and reporting at NYAPC.

Jan is an experienced accountant, having spent more than 30 years in the field, primarily with country clubs in Illinois and on the East Coast. She "loves the puzzle that is accounting" and her new job. "I am very happy to be here," says Jan. "I look forward to serving the church and its mission for many years to come. Please don't hesitate to contact me if there is anything I can do to be of assistance."

And goodbye — Church Administrator Judith McGovern has announced her retirement, effective April 10, 2015. Judith and her husband, Jim, have purchased a home in Hudson, Florida, approximately 45 minutes north of Tampa to be near family members and several friends from their years in Connecticut. Judith began work at NYAPC in March 2009. She responded to a classified ad via email, and Kitty Smith, church financial officer at the time, called and set up an interview less than 12 hours later. Judith left her position as office administrator at Church of the Good Shepherd (Methodist) in Vienna to come to NYAPC.

"My time here has been a fantastic experience—all the history, the interesting people, several challenging management issues, the best staff anyone ever had the opportunity to manage, and this beautiful building," says Judith. "I pray I have learned something new (almost) every day, and perhaps have shared some new ideas, too."

We wish Judith and Jim God's blessings in their new life in Florida. NYAPC's Personnel Committee is beginning the process of recruiting someone to fill the critical administrator role for the church.

Trustees Shift Focus to Upcoming Interior Renovations

by Hal Hiemstra

For much of 2014, the Board of Trustees focused its attention on completing exterior renovations of the church. During this period, Trustees also worked to develop cost-effective strategies for moving forward with heating and air conditioning system replacement in the church. By early summer of 2014, extensive engineering studies, HVAC system designs, and growing cost estimates for a new HVAC system led the Trustees to reconsider the scope and sequencing of interior building improvements. That reconsideration effort is now largely complete, and Trustees will soon receive bids on costs associated with replacing the 5th floor heating and air conditioning system along with the installation of new high efficiency boilers in the sub-basement of the church.

By limiting the next phase of interior building improvements to just the 5th floor and sub-basement boilers, Trustees are confident that the most pressing HVAC system needs in the church can be addressed at a cost that is well within the line of credit already established for this work. Further, by significantly reducing the scope of the next phase of building improvements, Trustees will also ensure that improvements made in the coming months won't be in conflict with future improvements and project phases that are expected to be identified in a long-range architectural master plan that is now being developed.

Master Planning for the Future

When cost estimates for replacing the entire HVAC system of the church – on all 6 floors — grew to an uncomfortably high level, Trustees felt that it would be inappropriate to commit such resources (or ask the congregation to raise that much money) without first having a long-range master plan in place to guide building investments now and well into the future. As such, in January, Trustees engaged the services of *cox graae + spack*, a highly regarded architectural firm that specializes in church and non-profit building renovations. Over the coming months, the firm will guide the congregation in developing a master plan that can serve as a road map for future building improvements over the next decade. This effort will build on past outreach efforts including earlier congregational listening sessions and a Ministries and Mission Task Force report that was presented to the Session in 2014. Those efforts identified many hopes and dreams held by members of congregation and suggested ways that our church building could be renovated and reconfigured to better serve those visions. Neither effort, however, prioritized suggested improvements or made any attempt to quantify their costs. The master planning process should do both.

Today, members of our congregation clearly understand that our existing HVAC system is failing and needs to be replaced. But, we don't know if the design of our existing spaces in the church are configured in ways that will most efficiently meet our programming needs and visions for the future. In the coming weeks, every member of the congregation will have the opportunity to respond to a survey seeking your thoughts on ways that

our existing building works, and ways that it could be improved. Survey results, along with information gathered in outreach sessions that the architects will be holding with various groups and boards of the church, coupled with results from earlier outreach and planning efforts, will be combined into an architectural master plan that will prioritize and identify rough costs associated with recommended improvements. This master plan will include basic renderings that will illustrate ways our church building can evolve to better meet today's programming needs and our vision for the future.

Trustees will use information in the master plan to plan future HVAC system improvement phases (from the park level through the 4th floor), as well as identify other possible project phases that might include space reconfiguration, bathroom improvements, technology upgrades, possible rooftop access, and other improvements that are likely to be identified as priorities by the congregation.

Paying for the Improvements

Simultaneous to the master planning effort now underway, and first phase HVAC system improvements that are expected to be installed by the summer of 2015, Trustees and the Funds Development Cluster of the Session have also recently engaged the services of The James Company, to conduct an assessment of our congregation's capacity to launch a full-scale capital campaign in 2015. The name of the group is rooted in the book of James. James is about faith and action. Bob Connolly, managing partner and owner of the James Company is adept at advising church congregations, hospitals, schools, and social agencies in ways to develop and manage stewardship and capital fund appeals. In particular, Bob has worked with congregations throughout the country and in the Washington D.C. area, including the Church of the Pilgrims, Takoma Park Presbyterian, The Church of the Epiphany and the Washington Interfaith Network, on ways to successfully develop and manage capital fund appeals and how to make Biblical stewardship principles an integral part of the appeal.

While a number of members of NYAPC have already contributed to the Vision 2020 Campaign which in many ways is serving as a precursor to a more formal Capital Campaign, it is anticipated that the strategic assessment now being conducted by The James Company will lead to a formal Capital Campaign that will likely be initiated in the summer of 2015.

For additional Information

For additional information on the first phase of the HVAC system improvements, please contact Trustee Hal Hiemstra at halh@summitstrategies.us. For additional information on the master planning process, please contact Trustees Rebecca Davis at rebecca_l_davis@yahoo.com or Caroline White at white.caroline.dc@gmail.com. For additional information on the Vision 2020 Campaign, please contact David Gillies at dcgillies@verizon.net or Amy Gillies at ahgillies@verizon.net.

Note: All words anywhere in this issue typed in blue with underlining are actually hyperlinks or email addresses and can be accessed by clicking on them.

Compassion, Peace and Justice Training Day:
April 17, 2015 at NYAPC
“Mass Incarceration and Systems of Exploitation”

On April 17th, from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm, Presbyterians from across the country will gather in Washington before the start of [Ecumenical Advocacy Days](#). Together, through workshops and plenaries, we will look at issues of mass incarceration and systems of exploitation and learn how individuals and congregations can make an impact in their community and their nation. [Register today](#) to hear how Presbyterians are paving the way for justice! The last day of Early Bird Registration, which is cheaper than the regular price, is February 28. If you wish to help, **volunteers are needed both on the Thursday and Friday Feb 16 and 17**. They will be allowed to attend the sessions without paying. To volunteer, please contact Fritz von Fleckenstein, fritz@alumni.reed.edu.

Speakers

The *Rev. Alonzo Johnson* is the new Mission Associate with the [Presbyterian Peacemaking Program](#). Alonzo has concluded his service as the pastor/head of staff of Oak Lane Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, PA. He is passionate about peacemaking and social justice issues and has rich experience in urban ministry with a focus on mentoring youth in the arts.



Eric LeCompte is the Executive Director of Jubilee USA Network and represents a civil society coalition of 75 US member organizations, 400 faith communities and 50 Jubilee global partners. Jubilee USA Network has won critical global financial reforms and more than \$130 billion in debt relief to benefit the world's poorest people. He serves on expert working groups to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights. Eric has more than 15 years of experience working with faith-based organizations to impact global policy on poverty, conflict and human rights.

Gail Tyree has had a long and distinguished career in grassroots and labor organizing in the South. She has been an international representative for the Workers United Labor Union; campaign director and organizer with [Grassroots Leadership](#) in Charlotte, North Carolina; campaign director for the Southern Faith Labor and Community Alliance in Memphis, Tennessee; and was a project labor organizer with the Communications Workers of America. She has extensive experience in planning, organizing and campaign strategy; training and developing the leadership capacity of individuals and groups; and working closely with a range of constituencies, including religious congregations, labor, immigrant communities and policymakers at the local and statewide level.



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 The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church

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 Frances Taylor Gench, J. Riley McDonald

The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church
 welcomes all people
 into community, worship, service and leadership.

NYAPC and Triangle Park Receive Downtown BID Support by Marilyn J. Seiber

In September 2014, NYAPC Triangle Park Committee representatives Beth DuMez, Marilyn Seiber, and Barry Tindall met with Downtown DC Business Improvement District staff Megan Kanagry, Capital Projects Manager, and Ellen Jones, Director of Infrastructure and Sustainability, to consider how BID might support park improvements. They offered to follow up with the National Park Service and DC Government offices on issues of park maintenance and rodent control and eradication.

In December, Ms. Kanagry reported that they met in the park with a representative of the DC Department of Health to consider the rodent issue. He planned to contact the NPS immediately to target the rat burrows in the park. The NPS has been treating the burrows in the park since October. He also advised that the church exterminator put out bait boxes with snap traps (no poison) around the building exterior simultaneously with the NPS actions. The Health Department staff also had ideas regarding park landscaping to help long-term with the rodent issue.

Ms. Kanagry and Ms. Jones also met with a representative from the Inter-American Development Bank who is interested in sharing maintenance tasks for the park.

Acts of Faith Continue at McClendon Center

by Dennis Hobb, McClendon Center's Executive Director

McClendon Center is the product of an act of faith. Rev. Dr. Jack McClendon, acting on behalf of a congregation intensely interested in social justice issues, started McClendon Center in 1980 to meet the needs of mentally ill District residents. The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church recognized then, as it still does today, the need to serve "the other" and acted on faith to create a mission that continues to this day.

Of course, McClendon Center has changed a great deal in the last 35 years. We've added hundreds of new clients and have expanded into providing psychiatric services, individual therapy, and community outreach and visits. One of the most significant changes was the Center becoming its own incorporated entity in 2003. This separation meant that what was once a clearly identifiable mission of NYAPC became a non-religious, non-profit entity.

Those of us who work at McClendon Center and who also are active in our own faith communities recognize that we cannot readily separate what is spiritual for us from how we work. In that way, we as individuals reflect in a complementary manner how McClendon Center exists in relation to the church that gave us life—we work from a spiritual base in a secular context whereas the Center works in a secular framework but within the historical context of a religious and spiritual institution—The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church.

One way in which we have chosen to express our work spiritually is by partnering with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. The Center's Day Program is in its second year of hosting a full-time Jesuit Volunteer. These volunteers are usually fresh out of college and want to give a year of service to a non-profit organization, all the while living in community with three to five other individuals who are committed to a common spiritual practice. Our current Jesuit Volunteer is Liz Motte, a recent nursing graduate from the University of San Francisco, who lives with three other Jesuit Volunteers in a group house in Petworth. Liz leads three groups each day, and also leads a treatment team at the Day Program. When she finishes her day, she returns to her group house where she and her housemates make meals together and spend their evenings reflecting on the work they have done at their placements. Once a week, they meet with their spiritual advisor who helps them reflect on their work, examine their faith, and deepen their spiritual practices.

The Jesuit Volunteer Corps is enthusiastic about McClendon Center, and it has been apparent to all of their staff who visit the Center that our mission is also a faith mission. It may not use the same language as the church does, but the result is the same—that we are committed to serving "the other" and meeting the needs of those who have little or no voice in this city.

At McClendon Center, we continue to be grateful to The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church for hosting us and supporting us—and for giving us life 35 years ago.

Choir Notes - Singing in Lent

by Meg House

The choir is looking forward to several events in the coming months. **We'll be presenting selections from Haydn's Creation Feb. 22, directed by visiting conductor Michael Reif from Germany.** In addition, we're beginning work on music for the seasons of Lent and Easter. If you'd like to join the choir, this is a perfect time to begin to learn this music — perhaps choir and learning music for this liturgical season could be your Lenten practice. You are welcome to sing with us for the season . . . or for longer!

We're also looking forward to hosting another "Festival Choir" in June — inviting members and friends in the congregation to come sing with us for a Sunday. We plan to do this regularly. Watch for details! And we continue to work on plans to partner with other church choirs, present music with instrumentation/orchestra, and sing pieces ranging from traditional repertoire of English cathedrals to spirituals, contemporary anthems, and more, all of which mirror the varied interests and backgrounds of our congregation.

You are always welcome to come by on a Thursday night — we rehearse from 7:15 - 8:45. If you have questions or ideas for musical offerings, let us know! Or if you'd like to get on our email list to know about coming choir events, email Meg House at meghouse8@gmail.com.

150th Anniversary Lincoln-Related Events

March 4-7: The Library of Congress will commemorate the 150th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address by displaying both the manuscript and reading copies of this iconic document in the Great Hall of the Thomas Jefferson Building.

March 7: 9:30 am - 11:30 pm - The Lincoln Group partners with the National Park Service to celebrate the 2nd Inauguration, at the Lincoln Memorial; Banquet at the Willard Hotel; Bobby Horton Civil War Musical Concert at NYAPC (Horton did the soundtrack for the Ken Burns documentary.)

May 16: 9 am- 5 pm - Symposium at NYAPC: "The Legacy of Lincoln and the American Civil War" Speakers: James McPherson, James Oakes, Eric Foner, Michael Burlingame, Allen Guelzo, Edna Greene Medford, Michael Kauffman.

May 16: 8 pm - Twilight Ceremony at the Lincoln Memorial to close the Civil War Sesquicentennial, in partnership with the National Park Service.

May 17: noon - 4 pm - Grand Review March; Civil War soldiers on Pennsylvania Avenue.

June 13: City Point and Petersburg by motor coach

Details and Updates at: www.LincolnGroup.org

Lincoln's Church Hosts Community Discussion of 13th Amendment

by John O'Brien



Frederick Douglass paid a call on NYAPC on Saturday, January 31. The famed civil rights leader and former slave came to life in an inspiring performance by Chicago-based actor Kevin McIlvaine. Through song and story, Douglass told of his slave years on Maryland's eastern shore, his escape to freedom and his relationship with abolitionists, including William Lloyd Garrison. Douglass retold several of his more famous speeches including the appeal to black men to

enlist, "Men of Color, to Arms," and his eulogy to Lincoln at the dedication of the Lincoln the Emancipator monument near the US Capitol. Songs of the era added to the power of his message even after 150 years. The NYAPC choir was joined by members of several other nearby church choirs to form the "Freedom Singers" for the day. Dr. Stan Engebretson arranged a musical program that amplified the Douglass message of hope and freedom and delighted the audience.

The event was a commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the House of Representatives' vote to concur with the Senate on approving the resolution for the 13th Amendment. This process has been dramatized in the recent movie, *Lincoln*. Dr. Edna Greene Medford, professor and chair of history at Howard University reviewed the events that shaped Lincoln's strategy to enact this permanent solution to ending slavery in the US. Surprising to most was the fact that Lincoln doubted that he would be re-elected in 1864, in which case he would be unable to complete the work of emancipation. Lack of military successes and popular concerns that the Civil War was being prolonged merely to free more slaves gave the Peace Democrats a powerful voting lead. When General Sherman captured Atlanta on September 2, 1864, the opinion tide turned again toward Lincoln.



Not knowing whether the process of reconstruction of the Union might allow for the seceded states to retain slavery, Lincoln pushed the House Republicans to pass the Amendment in January 1865. On the matter of "vote buying" in the House that was suggested in the movie, Dr. Medford stated that there is no conclu-

sive evidence and that most historians today give Lincoln the benefit of the doubt.

Leaders of nearby churches told of the history of their congregations in fighting for freedom and civil rights, and for voting rights immediately following the House vote. Pastor William Lamar of Metropolitan AME Church and the church historian, Thelma Dean Jacobs, described the creation of the AME churches, their predecessor churches in Washington, Israel Bethel and Union Bethel, and the important roles of Rev. Henry McNeal Turner and Bishop Daniel Payne. Mrs. Lincoln's dressmaker and friend, Elizabeth Keckly, was a member of Union Bethel and helped found an organization that provided relief for escaped slaves (contrabands), and later for black soldiers, their widows and families. These two churches became Metropolitan AME after the war. Frederick Douglass became an attendee there and was eventually buried from Metropolitan.

Rev. Robert Bell, pastor of The Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church, described his pre-Civil War church on McPherson Square as attracting the elite members of Washington black society. Many worked in the White House, such as William Slade, the president's valet who was portrayed in the movie as being mildly annoyed that Lincoln would always forget his gloves. Bell recounted that Slade was a ruling elder at the church and was seriously engaged in black improvement efforts, even founding an activist organization that lobbied the city council to support education for black children.

Roger Gench had welcomed this multi-church gathering with a reminder that our work of seeking justice continues and his hope that these churches will work together on current efforts, as well. History committee member John O'Brien described the many artifacts in NYAPC that connect us with the memory of our 16th president. For one and one-half hours, about 90 participants learned and enjoyed together, a very fitting tribute to the end of slavery and continuing quest for freedom and justice for all.

The program was aired on C-SPAN3 on Sunday, February 15 at 6:30pm & 10:30pm ET, but is available on the C-SPAN website for viewing [here](#).

Community Club Student Ryan Dent Receives New Futures Scholarship

by Tom Karr

Community Club student Ryan Dent (shown in 2014 with tutor Barry Tindall) was honored on January 29 as a 2015 New Futures scholar. A first-year student at Northern Virginia Community College studying business, Ryan became Community Club's 21st



student awarded a scholarship by New Futures. Since 2004, students nominated by Community Club have received over \$165,000 from New Futures. New Futures has changed its focus in recent years from helping students in four-year schools to supporting those attending vocational and two-year colleges. We congratulate Ryan!

Deacons Corner: *Highlighting Njoro, Kenya!*

by Karen Milam

The Deacons coordinate the outreach, social education and action ministries of NYAPC. Work includes outreach to the homeless, recovering alcoholics and drug abusers, tutorial programs for the city's youth, socialization for people with serious mental illness, outreach to people who are elderly, international missions, urban housing and other cooperative inner-city missions with the Downtown Cluster of Congregations and Washington Interfaith Network. The Deacons also have responsibility for leading ushering at worship services.

Between June 2014 and June 2015, the Deacons have been sharing with the New York Avenue community information on organizations our church is supporting financially. Each spring, the Deacons review requests for funding from about 15-20 organizations (city-wide and further afield) and prayerfully deliberate on how best to support them. In 2014, we supported 12 organizations that are doing great work in the world! In this *AveNews*, Karen Milam highlights for us our partnership with the Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) program out of the Njoro P.C.E.A. Church (Presbyterian Church of East Africa), which our church (via the Board of Deacons) has been supporting since 2007. The smaller Njoro committee overseeing our partnership will continue to provide updates in future *AveNews*, but we want to now highlight Kenya in our "Deacons' Corner" news since it was a priority for us in 2014. Future Deacons' Corner news will continue highlighting our other funding recipients.

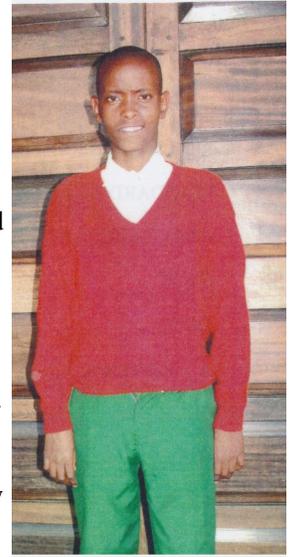
Jambo! Hello! My heart is glowing as I write these words for you all, NYAPC, for you all are a part of supporting the wonderful OVC program in Njoro, Kenya. I had the opportunity to visit Njoro two years ago with a large group from our church, including Shamika Bradley, Co-Director of Community Club, and led by Rev. Beth Braxton. I must tell you how impressed we all were with the leadership and faithfulness of this community that has lifted up to the Lord a group of children who are in need within their community.

One testament to this wonderful leadership in Njoro is when, together with our NYAPC leadership, both committees decided it best for the children to hire a director/social worker, Cathy Wambui. We were all able to meet Ms. Wambui when our group was in Njoro, a huge blessing! She has been able to visit homes of the students and their various schools, keeping up with the many complexities of the children's lives through their growth and development.

Ms. Wambui has put together a booklet with each student's biography and Beth Braxton provided a binder-copy to each member of the Njoro committee. It is full of the children's photos and their bios, so that we may pray for them each. 16 year old Milkah Nyambura wants to be a cardiologist when she grows up because that was her ambition



since she was a child. 14 year old John Njoroge wants to be a pilot when he grows up because he wants to serve his nation. Nine out of the 35 children wrote of wanting to become pilots or air hostesses. Bob Braxton pointed out that there is a landing strip close to Njoro that we drove by on our visit, and it is most likely the impetus for many of the children wanting to enter this field of work. The children also mention wanting to become a teacher, lawyer, doctor, nurse, policeman, social worker, surgeon, broadcaster, entertainer, and TV producer. Many children said that outside of school, they really like to play football (i.e., soccer). Purity Kaduka, one of the older girls who led the choir when we visited Njoro, said



she really likes to sing; as a witness to her capabilities, I can tell you she is a wonderful singer and leader! All of the children described ways in which they help out at home, from washing dishes to fetching water to looking after the chickens provided by the program to help their families.

Reading through the bios (hand-written by the children and typed by Ms. Wambui) reminds me of last year when Francis Muchemi, the chair of the OVC committee in Njoro, came with his wife, Jenny, to DC and brought us gifts of letters from the children to all the "Americans" that had visited the OVC children. We sat in a circle at Martha Davis's house and read them out loud. It was such a touching moment. They were hand-written, and many of the children had decorated their letters with stickers. They named some of the individual members in our group, and talked about how much they liked having us there. What more can you ask for than the gratefulness of a child! (You can find those letters on the NYAPC website together with the children's pictures [here](#))

I also want to add a bit of perspective I gained last week regarding this program when I recently attended a friend's presentation on her work with Engineers Without Borders (EWB). One of the requirements for a community to gain access to EWB is to contribute 5% of costs, at a minimum. Her project is in Cameroon, and she confirmed their community does indeed stay near the minimum amount. The Njoro church provided 20% of the funding for their OVC program last year, and they have just told us that they have managed to raise the money to provide 20% again this year! It is, indeed, a testament to their commitment, as is our commitment to them these past 8 years. Halleluiah, Amen.

Ruth Wanjiru – A Chicken Project Success Story

by Jeremiah Nduyu

Ruth Wanjiru is the grandmother of Samuel Njoroge. She has been taking care of Samuel after his parents separated and later his mother died of HIV/AIDS, which forced Samuel to become a street urchin. After receiving the information about his whereabouts, his grandmother rescued him from the street.

Samuel was enrolled in the program in 2007 through the aggressiveness of his grandmother. Since the time of enrollment, Ruth is excited when she explains how the program has had a positive impact on her grandchild's life and the entire family at large. When we visited her, the joy in her heart protruded automatically as she explained her gratitude towards the program.

She has been receiving several benefits which includes, for Samuel, provision of school uniforms, school fees, text books, food stuff and many more. In addition to her grandchild benefiting, Ruth benefited by receiving chickens which have eased the burden of bringing up Samuel.



She was introduced to the indigenous poultry project where she underwent a training which was facilitated by the program and later issued with six chickens: five hens and one rooster. The chickens reproduced up to 30 in number. She selected ten and took them to the market, where she sold them at KSH 500 each (c. \$5.50) totaling KSH 5,000 (\$55). She purchased one sheep with the aim of enlarging her livestock farming, which succeeded. The sheep produced two others, totaling three sheep. Unfortunately, one sheep died leaving her with two, which are expectant currently. Her plan is breeding the sheep and selling to members of the community.

She has also bought five turkeys from the sale of 15 chickens. She paid KSH 800 (c. \$8.88) for each of five turkeys in the year 2013. The turkeys have benefited her in several ways apart from slaughtering during celebration. When a chicken has laid many eggs and cannot hatch them, she gives them to the turkey for hatching, a source of protein for family and security within the compound.

Later, Ruth selected three middle aged chickens and sold at them KSH 250 each (c. \$2.77), purchased two rabbits which have reproduced up to 20 rabbits. She is earning from the rabbits through selling to members of community, slaughters and sells ready meat. The rabbits have also acted as a source of white meat for the family.

Ruth is still benefiting from the birds in many other ways such as: purchasing household utensils and minor school stationeries when needed for Samuel. She has served as an inspiration and an encouragement to other parents/guardians in our parents meeting, that they should be aggressive and focused, for that has been her secret of success. She encourages other parents/guardians to utilize any resource issued to them properly because all have an opportunity and potential of bettering their family's life, hence raising their standards of living. The program has impacted her positively and she is grateful.

Kenya Mission Trip August 2015

Applications are due this month for the two-week journey to Njoro, Kenya. One full week will be with the thirty-five orphans and vulnerable children, ages 7-17, whom we support. You will experience the joy of giving and enriching the lives of these students through music, dance, crafts, book and Bible study, hygiene, recreation and other activities as your life and faith also will be enriched!

You will stay a few nights in the homes of members of the Njoro PCEA Church, as well as a few nights in dorms at Egerton University nearby. There will be time to visit Nakuru National Park, a Giraffe Farm, and other cultural places of interest.



Please pray about whether God may be calling you to be a part of this vital ministry of nurture and education. If you have any concerns or questions you may direct them to Rev. Beth Braxton, chair of the Njoro project or any member of the Njoro Steering Committee. There are scholarship monies for this trip if needed.

Blue flyers with all the particulars of the trip and application forms are in the Information Center rack in the first floor reception area. Fill out the forms as soon as possible and put in Rev. Beth Braxton's folder in the mailroom. You can also find the application form [here](#). You can fill it in and email it to revbeth.braxton@gmail.com

History Happens . . . at NYAPC

James and Sonia Wall

By Edith Snyder and Marilyn Seiber

As part of the NYAPC History Committee's "Bicentennial Interviews Project," Marilyn Seiber and Edie Snyder interview long-time NYAPC members for the Archives files. They interviewed Jim and Sonia Wall on January 4, 2015, for this project and the article below.



For nearly 50 years, James T. and Sonia Wall have been an integral piece of the fabric of The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church (NYAPC). Initially attracted to and sustained over the years by the preaching of the church's ministers, ultimately the Walls value the individuals they have met and the relationships they have developed here. "It is the people who have kept us here with their warmth and caring, help and comfort," says Sonia.

Jim and Sonia came to NYAPC at different times with different backgrounds. Jim had just moved to Washington, DC in 1962 and was living with a roommate at the YMCA at 18th and G Streets, NW. Out for a walk one Sunday morning, he came upon NYAPC; attracted by the preaching of the Rev. George Docherty, Jim continued to attend sporadically after that first encounter. He had never attended church growing up, although his father was a baptized Catholic, so NYAPC offered him a new experience.

Sonia, on the other hand, has always gone to church. She first attended a fundamentalist Free Methodist church in Seattle as a youth, and did so even though her parents did not attend. Sonia then enrolled at Seattle Pacific College (now a university) from which she graduated. Later, while living and working in Lima, Peru and Bogota, Colombia, Sonia attended international churches.

Jim and Sonia met in Washington, DC through Jim's roommate who was a member of Sonia's training program for the US Information Agency, where she was the sole woman. They were married in Seattle at a Lutheran Church on October 19, 1963, but made the nation's capital their home, eventually settling in Arlington, Virginia.

Sonia wanted to find a church home, and Jim suggested that they try NYAPC. They enjoyed the preaching of Rev. Docherty, whom Sonia describes as "a fine man and a wonderful preacher." They have also appreciated the preaching of pastors who followed him, including that of Rev. Edmund Jones.

Jim and Sonia's first daughter, Kirsten, was born in 1967 and was baptized on Easter in 1968. Jim was baptized the Sunday before, Palm Sunday 1968, and Jim and Sonia joined the church at that time.

A Wide Range of Church Activities

Since then, both of the Walls have been involved in a wide range of NYAPC activities, from serving as Sunday school teachers and volunteers in the long running Meals on Wheels ministry to offering translation services in connection with NYAPC's partnership with the First Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Havana, Cuba, and serving as church photographer.

Early in their membership, Jim and Sonia worked in the toddlers' room during Sunday school classes. They remember the children of the Davies, Yoders, Schultheises, and Meeks who were under their care, and became friends with their parents.

Jim was one of the first men to participate in the Board of Deaconesses, now Diaconal Ministers, serving for two three-year terms between 1998 and 2008. He was also elected to the Board of Deacons where he served one term from 2009 to 2011. Jim particularly enjoyed his work as a Deaconess/Diaconal Minister, visiting and getting to know people in the congregation.

Following his retirement from US Government service in 1991, Jim worked for 18 years with Meals on Wheels, usually with NYAPC member Sam Cohen, Jeannette's husband. He also worked with "a fellow from Tunisia who always greeted me and said goodbye with a hug." Jim recalls Harry and Vassilla C. Boyles, a couple to whom he brought meals and who left a significant bequest to NYAPC for this and other church programs that feed people with food and companionship. Jim considers it a privilege to have served as a part of Meals on Wheels; it is, perhaps, his most cherished volunteer experience.

Jim is also well known as NYAPC's unofficial "official" photographer, always taking pictures of new members for the bulletin boards and church records, of boards and committees, and of events and receptions. Through the years he has transitioned from "using film to taking digital photos to using an iPhone" and has

appreciated and adapted readily to the changes in technology.

In addition to working with toddlers, Sonia and Jim also served together as greeters when asked by longtime member Mary Anne Davis. Sonia's most recent church involvement is with "the Cuba project" and as a member of the Cuba Partners Committee, where she has contributed her professional Spanish-language skills as a translator. Sonia and Jim traveled to Cuba to visit the congregation at First Havana in December 2007. Since then she has translated letters, emails, and documents; written letters of greeting and congratulations to First Havana for Easter, Christmas, and anniversaries; and translated for First Havana's pastor, Rev. Héctor Méndez, when he has visited NYAPC and for General Presbyterian Wilson Gunn when he journeyed to and preached at our partner church in Havana.

Careers in Language and Government

Sonia's education and profession has been in languages. In addition to her bachelor's degree from Seattle Pacific in Spanish and physical education, Sonia has two master's degrees—the first from the University of Washington in language teaching and linguistics, and the second from Georgetown University in Latin American studies. Her first job in the DC area was teaching Spanish at Arlington's Wakefield High School, where longtime NYAPC member Lois Steffey also taught. In the course of her teaching career, Sonia served at all four high schools in Arlington County. After retiring from the public schools, she taught Spanish at George Mason University for a decade, where she had the opportunity to learn about computers.

Jim's undergraduate education was at Michigan State College (now University) in psychology and sociology. When the Korean War broke out, Jim decided to leave school in his senior year, just 35 quarter-hours short of graduation, for the US Air Force. A week into basic training, Jim knew he had "made a mistake." After postings in Texas, Colorado, Florida, and Texas a second time, Jim was able to apply in February 1952 for a six-month program called "Operation Bootstrap" that allowed him to return to Michigan State to complete his degree. He also studied German that year, which prepared him for an assignment to Germany from October 1952 to September 1954. There, he finished his military service and received the Air Force's Occupation and Good Conduct Medals. Jim went into the service as a private and finished "after three years, ten months, and twenty-eight days" as a staff sergeant.

Jim's professional career after the Air Force ranged from a one-day stint at the Social Security Administration as a claims representative and more than two years at the Michigan Liquor Control Commission as an enforcement investigator to a year at the US Atomic Energy Commission, Argonne National Laboratories, in Chicago and five years at the National Labor Relations Board as a budget analyst. Jim then spent 25 years as an analyst for a variety of US Department of the Navy commands, including his final 16 years at the Pentagon with the Navy Comptroller where he received a medal for financial management from Assistant Secretary of the Navy Robert McCormack.

Travel and Genealogy

The Walls love travel and genealogy. Sonia has lived and traveled extensively in Latin America, first in Lima, Peru in 1959 where she taught at the American School and made multiple trips to the famed Machu Picchu. After Sonia and Jim married, they drove from Washington, DC to El Salvador on a one-month trip along the Pan American Highway. The road then consisted largely of mud and trenches, and the Walls experienced multiple flat tires and the unsettling sensation of driving over and popping thousands of tiny frogs crossing the highway at night. Sonia has been to Spain four times, Sweden five times, and every country in Latin America except Paraguay and Honduras.

In addition to Spain and Sweden, Sonia and Jim have added Austria to their travel list because their younger daughter, Karin, and her husband, Nathaniel, and children, Annibel and George, are posted to Vienna through the US State Department. Kirsten, with husband, Richard, and daughter, Astrid, live closer to home—in fact, right next door. While her house was being built, Astrid enjoyed watching the progress with her classmates because her elementary school was just across the street. Kirsten and Astrid are also members at NYAPC, where Astrid is very involved in NYAPC's church school program.

Sonia describes herself as "100% Swedish"—and has the genealogy to prove it. Although her mother was born in Seattle, Sonia's grandparents returned to Sweden, where she grew up. Her father was born and raised in Sweden. Both of Sonia's parents came to Seattle in the 1920s where they met and married. Sonia has studied Swedish for years and hopes that her children and grandchildren will maintain the family relationships there.

Both Jim and Sonia enjoy genealogy research. Jim volunteered for 19 years at the Family History Center, where he discovered that he has German ancestors with roots in North Carolina and Pennsylvania. Sonia has created a book of her family in Sweden.

Looking Forward

As they look to the future, Jim and Sonia are very hopeful about the growth of the church, especially the addition of young adults and many more children during the past decade. They admire the church and the congregation's commitment to social justice, but urge NYAPC to continue to cultivate and nurture the development of each individual's personal relationship with God. They see that relationship expressed daily in what people at NYAPC do. Quiet and steadfast in their service to and participation in the church, Sonia and Jim and their family have been a blessing to our church family.

NYAPC Christmas Cards and Greetings to Presbyterian Churches in Iraq and Syria

by Marilyn J. Seiber

In early December, the Peace & Justice Committee mailed Christmas cards to the Presbyterian Churches in Baghdad and Basrah, Iraq and Homs, Syria. Each church received 22 cards from NYAPC adults and 17 handmade cards from the children. Each pastor and congregation received a letter from Rev. Roger Gench and the congregation sending Christmas greetings. Photos of the decorated sanctuary, the children's Christmas pageant, and the newly lit church steeple were emailed to the churches. We also informed them that they are part of our Alternative Christmas program. We wanted the pastors and congregations to know that in the midst of their wars, destroyed homes and churches, and refugees, we have not forgotten them and are praying for them, especially during the Christmas Season. The following are some of their responses.

From Rev. Karajili in Homs, Syria:



“Again and again, I can't tell what it means for us that you are sharing our life in both spirit and body . . . now I am very happy for the lights of the tower of your church, and I see the pictures of your church on the board. It is really exciting that you are thinking of us like that . . . I will send you some of the pictures of our Christmas festivals in the our church . . .”

From Rev. Farouk Hammo in Baghdad, Iraq:

Dear friends in Christ,

Greetings and thank you for the Christmas Cards that you have sent us. This morning I have collected them from the post office. All will be distributed to our congregation as planned. Thank you for your thoughts and prayers. Indeed as Christmas season is approaching we are burdened with many families who are facing this winter without shelters as having been displaced due to the latest terrorist activities. We need your prayers and supplications for them and us to be able to comfort them and help them to get over this crisis.

May the almighty Lord and saviour Jesus Christ bless you abundantly now and forever more, Amen.

May this season of Christmas be special to you all as our Lord is keen for more souls to be saved while He is getting ready to return to get His bride to be with Him for ever and ever, Amen.

Sincerely Yours,
Rev. Farouk Hammo, Senior Minister, Baghdad-Iraq

From Dr. Zuhair Fathallah in Basrah, Iraq:

Greetings to you from Basrah and the congregation of the Church.

The cards arrived on Monday 15, which is good just a week before Christmas. Thank you very much to all of you, yourself, the children and the congregation of NYAPC. I wish you all a very very happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

We will start our celebration on Friday Dec. 19 by having Christmas Carols night, which is informal and in the Function Hall and definitely the church women will have plenty of pastries. On Tuesday morning Dec. 23, the kindergarten and the nursery will have their Christmas party, which is a big headache trying to control 250 kids when Santa is around with his bag full with good things. Lastly on Christmas day we have the service in the morning with gathering in the hall after that. On New Year's Day we have a service in the morning as well to start the 2015 by gathering in the church.

My best wishes for all the congregation of NYAPC and have a happy Christmas.

God bless you all,
Zuhair Fathallah

Elder Yousif al-Saka: Letter from Baghdad

by Marilyn J. Seiber

Elder Yousif al-Saka from the National Protestant Evangelical Church (Presbyterian) in Baghdad has visited NYAPC twice: in fall 2008 as a PC(USA) International Peacemaker, and in July 2010 as a member of a Christian Leaders of Iraq delegation to Washington, D.C. He wrote to us in December 2014 with news of his activities, the Baghdad church, and the situation in Iraq. The following is an excerpt from his letter.

Greetings from Baghdad!

I am in Baghdad, used to go from Baghdad to Amman back and forth, according to the security situation in Baghdad. I returned to Baghdad two months ago, and the situation here is not all right.

A big part of the country and many of its main cities are under control of the terrorist gangs (Islamic extremists), precisely the northern and eastern areas. They have announced an Islamic state over those places and Mosul (the second biggest city in Iraq) was a part of that state. Accordingly, all the Christians who used to live there and in the outskirts were displaced, and many churches

and monasteries were destroyed. Some of them were ancient places and had been built hundreds of year ago or maybe in the early Christian era. The terrorist gangs almost reached Baghdad last summer, and fighting still exists between them and the Iraqi army. However, danger has receded, and the American-led air raids have made some impact in striking the groups of those gangs, which help some time in defeating them over some critical places. On the other hand. we are still suffering from almost daily explosions, suicide bombers and car bombs. These incidents are still happening in Baghdad randomly on a daily basis. So many innocent people have lost their lives because of that, and life here in Baghdad became uncomfortable and dangerous.

The Islamic extremists' gangs have committed unbelievable criminal acts nobody can imagine, slaughtering, killing, looting, and raping. There is no room in this letter to mention all their horrible doings, perhaps you have heard some through the media. In the wake of these atrocious acts, so many people have made their way to other safe places. The toll of displaced people has reached two million, their miserable conditions are considered one of the worst human disasters and most coercive displacement in modern history. Several humanitarian societies as well as government efforts have managed to pitch tents in order to settle them, and provide them with the necessary living aids to save their lives from certain death. Indeed plenty of deaths have happened especially among children and weak people. No matter what to say, we cannot describe their misery precisely in winter time.

I am still available at old Presbyterian church in Baghdad, but I quitted the church's council, which I headed for six years. Our entire effort nowadays in Iraq are devoted for helping our displaced brothers, the people of the occupied areas by the Islamic state, especially Christian. How to reach them and how to give them the necessary humanitarian aids such as shelters, food, medicine, and clothes, in order to ease their suffering for life necessities especially in winter time. Pray for us so that Lord will give us the strength and desire in our work and to keep us from evil.

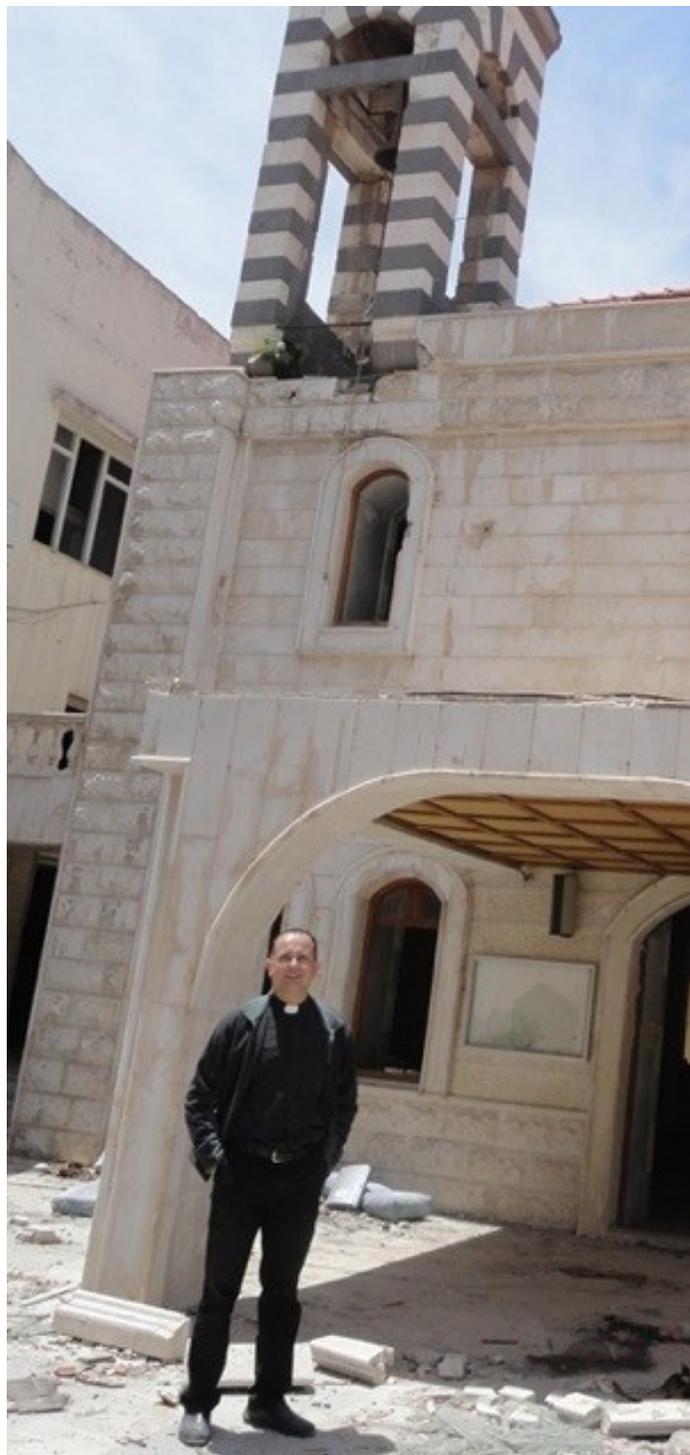
Christian are still fleeing from Iraq, of course, because the unstable situation and being afraid of the Islamic extremists might take over. This situation is obviously having a negative impact over the church's activities. The number of Christians is getting diminished in continuous manner. Some of the cities are absolutely vacant from Christians, like Mosul, which is considered the cradle of Christianity in Iraq, and threshold of the evangelical preaching in the whole middle-east area in the nineteenth century. The first official evangelical church was established in Mosul in 1840 during the Ottoman era. But today there is a big fear that Iraq or maybe a large part of the Middle East area will be totally vacant from Christians as it is in Saudi Arabia.

Best regards to the members of your dear church, I will not forget my visit to it and its good believers. The grace of the Lord and God's love and the Holy Spirit are with you now and forever, Amen.

Yousif and Maysoun

NYAPC Connects with Presbyterian Church in Homs, Syria by Marilyn J. Seiber

After a visit to Washington, D.C. by Presbyterian Pastor Rev. Dr. Riad Jarjour from Homs, Syria in January 2014, the Peace & Justice Committee on behalf of NYAPC sent a letter to the pastor of the Homs church, Rev. Mofed Karajili, to introduce our church, its history and current mission, and church photographs, with the invitation to develop a relationship of prayer and partnership. Rev. Karajili sent the letter on the next page in response. It is an amazing church!



Rev. Mofed Karajili

Dear sisters and brothers in NYAPC,

It is really wonderful to hear from you and from your blessed church of the great heritage. We are very proud that we, the Presbyterian Church of Homs (PCH), and the NYAPC have the same root of faith and confession. I have a look at the building of your church that you have sent and it is really wonderful one.

Our church is been established in 1850. From its very beginning, it established the Evangelical School in Homs (1855) the most ancient school in the city of Homs. This is the only protestant school established by the local people not by missionaries. From that time, the school is one of the main enlightenment centers for all of Homs governorate, great persons have graduated from it over the past century. Its capacity is 1500 students from the primary level to the high school.

In 2001 PCH established an Elderly House in Homs. All of the buildings that belong to the church (the Sanctuary, the Synod office buildings, the school and the Elderly House) were horribly hurt because of the war, but with the help of Heavenly Father, the life turned back again to the school (that was stopped in the spring term of 2013 and now has 801 students Muslims and Christians, male and female), and the Elderly House has 40 elderly persons (the capacity is 45). Only two weeks ago we began the renovation of the Sanctuary and office buildings. When the Sanctuary was destroyed by the war, we moved to the Elderly House and are using the chapel of the Elderly House for the Sunday service. All of our spiritual life is now in this poor Elderly House: the Synod office, church events and activities.

Before the war, we had many weekly meetings in addition to the Sunday service, the ladies meeting, the Sunday school, the youth meeting and the teens meetings. In the midst of the war these meetings had to stop; now we gain back the youth meeting (age 18- 30) and the ladies meeting. Of course, we haven't recovered completely, but we are doing our best to be on the right road. We are working hard to get back the Sunday school, as well. Things are not easy because we are suffering the lack of safety and many logistic matters (electricity, fuel, transportation, etc.), so to get everything back is not easy work. It will take time, but we are sure that God is with us.

After all, we are very thankful that you are thinking, praying and doing your best for us. We wish we can keep in touch. In the name of my congregation and on my behalf, I pray that may our Heavenly Father be always with you.

Yours, Mofid Karajili, Pastor, Presbyterian Church of Homs, Syria

Church Responses to Diplomatic Normalization Between the United States and Cuba

by Marilyn J. Seiber

On December 17, 2015, Presidents Barack Obama and Raúl Castro simultaneously announced the agreement between the two Governments to begin negotiations toward normalization of diplomatic relations. Among the many responses to this effort,

Rev. Héctor Méndez, First Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Havana, and the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba have praised the announcement with prayerful hope for the future. Here are excerpts from these statements:

Rev. Héctor Méndez, First Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Havana:

“TO OUR SISTER CHURCHES IN USA:

Today, President Barack Obama and President Raúl Castro announced the normalization of the diplomatic relationships among USA and Cuba next year and prisoners who were released in both countries. We thank God for these agreements and we'll continue praying and working as we have done during these 50 years in order to have normal relationships between our two countries. Our Christian faith always impels us to work for the reconciliation and the peace. We thank God for the support we have received from you through these years, being an example that nothing and nobody can separate the Church of Jesus Christ.

Let's pray for blessings led to the USA and Cuba and together we can keep on working for a better world.

In Christ,
Rev. Hector Mendez, Pastor,
First Presbyterian Reformed Church of Havana

Declaration from the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba (translated by Steve Yu):

With respect to the announced reestablishment of relations between the governments of Cuba and the US:

The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Cuba thanks God and joyfully celebrates these agreements. For decades, we've had bridges of understanding through visitation exchanges between the Cuban and American churches; we have dedicated ourselves to communicate the ideal evangelical message of achieving peace and justice; and we have lifted our voice against the harsh economic and commercial tactics imposed on our people by North American politics. Nevertheless, we have received decidedly strong support from our sister Presbyterian Church in the US during official conversations and resolutions with Congressional leaders and representatives of the US Government. We recognize the efforts made by the Vatican, specifically Pope Francis I, as well as the Government of Canada, with respect to their roles in the achievements of these agreements. We trust that we are approaching an era of peace between our nations, just as we celebrate Christmas in recognition of the divine purpose of peace and good will in our world.

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom He favors!" (Luke 2:14)

Dr. Reinerio Arce Valentín, Moderator
Rev. Daniel Izquierdo Hernández, Secretary General
Rev. Francisco Marrero Gutiérrez, President of the Council

Food for Thought: Thoughts for Food

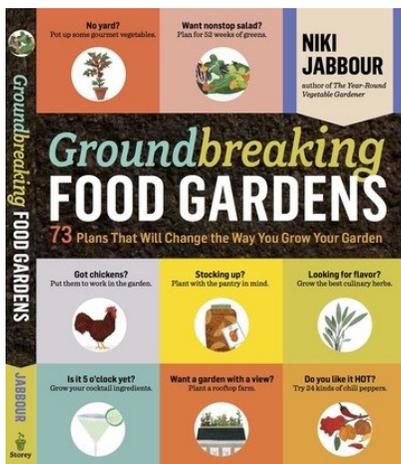
by Martha Sykora

Gardening, besides being a practical, life-nurturing task, is also always a spiritual activity. In it, people attempt to make visible and tasty what is good, beautiful, and even holy. Every act of gardening presupposes and embodies a way of relating to creation, a way that invariably invokes moral and spiritual decisions. Though membership in a garden is a given, how we will take our place in the membership is not. Our aim must be to develop into good gardeners, gardeners who work harmoniously among the flows of life. This means that besides vegetables, flowers, and fruit, gardeners are themselves undergoing a spiritual cultivation into something beautiful and sympathetic and healthy. A caring, faithful, and worshipping humanity is one of the garden's most important crops."

- Norman Wirzba, [Spiritual Gardening](#)

Recent sermons have encouraged us to be mindful of how our food arrives on our plates and to perhaps become more involved in the process ourselves. Planning a garden is also a great antidote for cold winter weather! Here are some resources that may be useful.

Not sure if you have a place suitable to grow anything edible? Take a look at *Groundbreaking Food Gardens: 73 Plans That Will Change the Way You Grow Your Garden* by Niki Jabbour,



Storey Publishing LLC, 2014. The plans are clearly explained and illustrated and include such topics as a tiny “Urban Farm-scape,” “Beautiful Balcony Edibles,” “Eat Your Yard,” “Community Plot,” “52 Weeks of Salad” and 68 more! You are sure to find encouragement and inspiration that will fit your own situation and interests.

If you’d prefer a community garden plot and the associated camaraderie and informal guidance of other gardeners, take a look at

DC: <http://dpr.dc.gov/page/dpr-community-gardens>

Maryland: <http://extension.umd.edu/growit/community-gardens>

Virginia: <http://environment.arlingtonva.us/gardens/community-gardens/>, or <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring/plots.htm>, or <http://alexandriava.gov/CommunityGardens>

Note: there may be a waiting list for a plot. If you are interested, do not delay in asking to be added to the list.

Once you have a site and a plan, you might like to check out the free garden planner available at www.smartgardener.com. By entering your zip code you can ensure you are choosing crops that will do well in this area. You can see suggestions for preparing your soil, and you can sign up for weekly email reminders

letting you know when it is time to start a particular crop indoors or set out transplants or seeds in the garden, when and how much to water or fertilize, etc. You can even order your seeds directly from the well-recognized sponsors of the website if you would like, although it is not a condition of use of the site (and advertising is not intrusive). There are many other features that make this a wonderful resource for new and experienced gardeners alike.

OK, so despite all the resources above perhaps this is just not the year to grow your own? No worries, you can take advantage of your nearby farmers’ market, or consider joining a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and get a regular weekly share of local, in-season, and perhaps organic produce for a set fee paid in advance for the duration of the growing season. More info on CSAs here: <http://www.localharvest.org/csa/> and on CSAs as well as other local food options here: <http://www.usdalocalfooddirectories.com/listings.html> (note that these sites will probably be much more useful as the summer growing season approaches; also note that CSAs may begin selling shares as early as February or March and shares may sell out quickly).

There are many, many other resources readily available from your public library, the County Extension Service Master Gardeners, local garden centers, etc. A final one I would like to highlight is *Washington Gardener Magazine*. It is geared to all types of gardening in the DC/MD/VA region. The website <http://www.washingtongardener.com/> has been under revision as long as I have been aware of it; still, check it out because it remains a great resource for local gardeners. You can sign up for seed swaps (and maybe get free seeds), tours, book clubs, a blog, a Yahoo group that provides a daily “garden to-do tip” and serves as a forum where you can get all your gardening questions answered quickly, and much more of interest besides the monthly eNewsletter and quarterly on-line magazine. *(Full disclosure: occasionally I write book reviews for the magazine.)*

Happy gardening!

The Board of Diaconal Ministers

by Helen Joseph

The primary purpose of the Board of Diaconal Ministers is to minister to the members of the Church by visiting the sick, the elderly, and those confined at home or nursing homes; giving aid and comfort to the bereaved; helping so far as possible members in need of special care. In addition, the Board is responsible for Sanctuary flowers, for hospitality (at memorial services or as requested by the Session), for Communion preparation, and other duties as requested by the Session. The Board of Diaconal Ministers serves under the general supervision of the Session.

The above statement is what is described as the “Purpose” of the Diaconal Ministers as found in our Bylaws. These duties have evolved over the years to become a very important part of NYAPC. *(continued on page 14)*

(from Page 13) At a congregational meeting of January 1949, the Board of Deaconesses was formed. At that time, nine women were appointed to supplement visitation of the ill, hospitalized, homebound, etc. As time went on, the number of members has increased periodically, and today the Board consists of 21 members, men and women. Several years ago, after researching the role of "deacon," it was decided that the Deaconesses should be ordained and that the name be changed to The Board of Diaconal Ministers.

In reflecting back on 2014, it has been a very busy year. Countless cards and notes were sent, weekly bouquets were made and given to members of our congregation, many times involving personal visits, new babies were honored with a single red rose shortly after their birth and quite a few receptions were held. On Easter Sunday and the Sunday after Christmas, 50 of our church members received a beautiful plant that had graced the Sanctuary.

The Diaconal Ministers would appreciate everyone's help in identifying those in the congregation who might need special attention whether it be a card or a visit or just prayers. Often there are concerns and prayer requests at the two church services that may not be on the Prayer Care List. If you take note of any of these, please let any of the Diaconal Ministers know or call the church office. The names of the Diaconal Ministers are listed in the Annual Report which will be distributed at the Congregational Meeting.

Birthday Fund Cupcake Sunday

by John Schultheis

Members and friends with January, February and March birthdays were invited to the Narthex on Sunday, February 15, after both worship services to receive birthday greetings and a cupcake from the Planned Giving Committee.

A birthday is a special gift from our creator, God. You are invited to consider acknowledging this gift of life--your own, or that of someone you love, respect or wish to honor--or perhaps that of a new life within our congregation-- with a contribution to the Birthday Fund for Benevolence or Endowment.

Birthday Fund contribution envelopes are available at the front and rear of the sanctuary in literature racks, as well as in the entryway. Or, ask me or Cathy Schultheis to mail you one. When giving a contribution in honor of someone's birthday, you may wish to pick up a Birthday Fund greeting card that you can send to the celebrant. They are also available in literature racks and in the entryway. When contributions are received, the church office staff will advise the celebrant/honoree of the gift made for them (but not the amount thereof).

We at NYAPC are blessed to be a blessing through our time, talents and monetary contributions. Thank you for all your gifts, the impact of which is felt not only at New York Avenue, but also in our community and throughout the world.

Alma W. Yeomans, Former Member and Missionary

by Cathy Schultheis

Many members and friends will miss Alma Yeomans, former NYAPC member and missionary. Alma was the wife of a U.S. State Department officer and raised her family while living in Vienna and Kathmandu and traveling extensively in Europe and Asia. She moved to Arlington, VA and joined NYAPC, serving from 1971-1980 on the Session and from 1985-1987 on the Board of Trustees.

Alma had served the Methodist Church as a missionary in Japan prior to raising her family and then, following her retirement in 1991, began a second missionary experience in rural northern Thailand in the so-called "heroin triangle." Her letters to NYAPC members were exciting and described in great detail her daily life and the dangers of living her faith while working in Thailand.

Having earned her Master's Degree in Urban Planning, she helped establish the Women's Studies Program at George Washington University, worked for the President's Council on Management Improvement and for Legal Services of Northern Virginia.

Alma moved to Albuquerque, NM, in 1993 to be closer to her sons and became an active member of Sandia Presbyterian Church there. Whether in Japan, Thailand, Washington, D.C., or Albuquerque, Alma championed the underserved and underprivileged in the world, acting on her beliefs. She marched in peace demonstrations and in support of civil rights; she did volunteer work at churches and provided generous financial support to a host of charities. She lived her life so that she could help effect needed changes in the world around her. She was a woman with a quick mind, strong ideals, a beautiful smile and wonderful sense of humor.

NYAPC is blessed to have been an integral part of Alma Yeoman's Christian ministry and legacy. We give thanks for her life and legacy. Cards and letters may be sent to Alma's son, Paul Yeomans, at pauldyeomans@gmail.com.

New Plants and Planters

New, beautiful plants and large planters have been added to the outside of the entryway compliments of Bob and Beth Braxton (plants) and the Trustees (planters). Thank you to Beth Braxton and Barry Tindall for doing the "gardening work" of putting the plants in the planters!

A Gift from Mary J. B. Lee

by Cathy Schultheis



Former NYAPC member Mary J. B. Lee who died on April 10, 2014, in Winchester, VA, remembered NYAPC with a gift from her estate in the amount of \$10,000, to be used for benevolent and religious purposes.

Mary was a deacon at NYAPC (1980-1985) and ushered almost every Sunday during that time, along with fellow deacons and saints Will Myers, Bob Burcham, Scott Noble and Lynn McFate. She was also active in Presbyterian Women.

Born in Antrim, Northern Ireland, in 1930, Mary eventually moved to the Washington, D.C. area and worked as a legal secretary for the American Bar Association. Upon retirement she moved to Winchester, VA where her lovely home was the setting for many church and community-centered parties at which guests enjoyed Mary's gourmet cuisine. She eventually moved to the Westminster Canterbury Retirement Community in Winchester.

When Mary joined the small historic Opequon Presbyterian Church in Winchester, the church had a membership of 200 worshipping in a 108-year old sanctuary that held only 125 people. As the church began to grow (it has over 460 members today), members recognized Mary's financial expertise, legal and administrative skills, and elected Mary to two terms on the 3-member Board of Trustees. Mary helped lead the church to a decision to build a new sanctuary with a capacity of 330, helped secure the financing for it, and played a major role in the capital campaign. She was candid, direct, and known as the church's "voice of conscience" in financial matters.

Mary was actively involved with the senior adult monthly lunch/social group ("Lunch Bunch"), preparing many meals and planning activities for several years. In 1999 she became a founding leader in the new weeknight LOGOS program for children, youth and their families. She assumed responsibility for the meals served each Wednesday night during the school year, starting with set-up and kitchen prep, cooking, serving and cleanup and never complained about staying late to hand-wash all the dishes, pots and pans, since there was no commercial dishwasher in the church at that time.

In addition to her church-centered activities, Mary loved to travel to Ireland and Scotland regularly to visit her siblings and their families. Favorite trips included an African safari and a walk on the Great Wall in China. She loved to be busy and volunteered with many charities while at NYAPC and Opequon.

We give thanks for Mary Lee's many years of dedicated service at NYAPC and that she believed in and loved the missions of our church so much that even after moving and becoming a member of another Presbyterian Church in a different city, she chose to remember NYAPC with a gift in her will. Mary Lee firmly believed that keeping in touch with each other was vital to living the

Christian life, and she faithfully encouraged communication within the church community.

Thanks be to God for the ministry and legacy of Mary Jane Bellew Kidd Lee!

TRANSITIONS

Marriages:

Karen Milam and Tyler Feret, October 11
Jessica Cleveland and Joseph Brady, October 18

Births:

Ava and Elinor Browning June 11
Lila Frances Ashworth July 1
Julia Margaret Thierry August 12
August Owen Golden September 15
Sylvan James Spearman October 7
Luke Nathaniel West October 7
Marten Lee Kaehler October 22
Dylan Tiernan Lauer December 5
Finn Hamilton Alter December 12

Sacrament of Child Baptism

September 14 Nicolás (Nico) Robert Sciupac; Born: April 13, 2014
September 21 Sydney Maryanne Norfolk; Born: May 26, 2014
September 28 Christopher Chang Tewell; Born: November 23, 2013
October 19 Charlotte Jean Dewhurst; Born: December 13, 2013
December 14 Lila Frances Ashworth; Born: July 1, 2014

Reaffirmation of Child Baptism

November 9 Julia Margaret Thierry; Born: August 12, 2014

Deaths:

Mary Lee April 10
Frank Bradley July 23
Richard Parvin Aug 11
Elena Ruiz Gonzalez August 17
James Burroughs September 11
Myrtle Moring September 17
Alma Yeomans October 2
Colin Hiemstra
Dr. Rosa Migdalia Cabrera Noriega
Bill Moring October 17
Marguerite Riley November 3
Kendall Francisco November 11
Frances Mills November
Roselynd Perera November
Lois Steffey November 28
Virginia "Ginge" Peddle December 4
Thomas Lawrence McNamara December 5
Mary Milson Inscoe December 9
William Eitel December 22
Bob Fleming January 12
Martha Jo McCully January 13
Mac Range January 19

CALENDAR

Feb. 18 — Ash Wednesday — Soup and Bread Supper at 6 pm, Worship at 7 pm

First Four Sundays in Lent — Youth and Adult CE Offerings — "Faith and Fiction"

March 7 — Baby-Toddler Parents Play Group, 9:30-11:30

March 29 — Palm Sunday Congregational Sunday at 10 am in Peter Marshall Hall

April 2 — Maundy Thursday — Soup and Bread Supper at 6:00 pm, Worship at 7 pm

April 5 — Easter — Sunrise Service at 7:15, Worship at 8:45 and 11:00 am. Breakfast at 7:45 and 10:00 am

April 11 — Baby-Toddler Parents Play Group, 9:30-11:30

April 17 — OPW Compassion, Peace, and Justice Training Day (at NYAPC)

April 17 - 20 — OPW Ecumenical Advocacy Days

April 25 — Women's retreat

May 17 — Youth Sunday

May 24 — Begin one service for the summer

May 31 — Teacher Appreciation Congregational Picnic 12:00 Noon — All Welcome!

June 7 — Youth Sunday

Saturday, June 13 — Capital Pride March with More Light Presbyterians

Friday, Oct 23 — Greater Washington Immigration Film Fest showing at NYAPC

Oct. 30-Nov. 1 — All Church Retreat at Meadowkirk



The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church
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