

# AVENEWS

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

## A Miracle for Today

by Anne Laroche

For much of the fifty-four years since the Cuban Revolution of 1959, it required a mini-miracle for most Americans to visit a country that is only ninety miles from Key West, Florida. Over the decades, that has changed dramatically. Popes and Presbyterians alike have visited this beautiful island in increasing numbers. I was thrilled to be one of them, visiting our partner church, First Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Havana, which was established in 1890.

On April 15, 2013, nine of us left for Havana under a General license as authorized by the Treasury Department under restrictions to travel to Cuba for religious activities. The Rev. Roger J. Gench commissioned us to share our stories and nurture our partnership with the First Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Havana.



This trip was especially meaningful to me because my father, The Rev. W. Donald Harris, in his work with the Presbyterian Board of National Missions in New York City, visited pastors in Cuba during the revolutionary period and knew the Rev. Héctor Méndez, who is now pastor of our partner church. How did he manage to get to Cuba when there was so much mistrust and almost a nuclear war? Most likely, he coaxed Congressional and Embassy staff to facilitate his passage through Madrid, Prague or Mexico City. Then, he used his Spanish with customs agents to allow him to enter Cuba with dozens of suitcases of supplies the pastors requested. Unnoticed were the invitations he brought for pastors to attend world conferences in Europe and Russia. Rev.

Méndez spoke of flying without any money to a foreign country and being met by my father, who paid all his expenses through Presbyterian solidarity!

In the history of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Cuba, a delegation from our former United Presbyterian Church in the USA had been invited to witness the formation of an independent church in Cuba, one no longer connected to the Synod of New Jersey. My father had kept an envelope of black and white photos of this key event in September 1967, which I gave to Rev. Héctor Méndez. Much to everyone's surprise, he recognized himself among the officials in the photos and announced his intention to display an enlarged photo in the church's entryway.

Five of us had never been to Cuba and were excited to separate myth from fact and discover the reality of life in the land of the Castros. Leaving the airport terminal, we were struck by the heat and the sight of an almost-empty parking lot. A van hired from the Methodist church was waiting for us. Roads had few cars, and they were mostly American from the 50s. On several mornings before breakfast, we explored our quiet street (Calle 17) on which were located a hospital, a Sephardic synagogue, an embassy, a decorative arts museum, many former mansions, a meager, open-air market, small restaurants and clubs.

We started at First Presbyterian in Central Havana with an orientation session with Rev. Méndez and went to the dining hall for the first of many copious buffets of nutritious local dishes: several vegetables, rice and beans, pork or chicken, tomatoes, cucumbers, beets, carrots, mangoes, melons, several desserts, fruit punch, bottled water and instant coffee.

On our first full day, Rev. Méndez gave us an introduction to Cuba by describing how people live and how their church enlivens their neighborhood and reaches out to people. We were welcomed daily by

friendly church members in their Bible studies, Tai Chi classes, and baseball practices.

We saw few libraries open but First Havana has a separate entrance for its library, and it is free and open to everyone. We spoke to their librarian and children there who were enjoying spring break that week. Besides books, it has over one thousand audiovisuals to lend on many religious subjects. After our first lunch, we joined a prayer group and then visited a weekly "School for the Elderly" where seniors come together for exercise and music. Then, we set off for the historic sights of Old Havana passing by a billboard of President Obama with the demand/slogan in English "Free the Cuban 5," referring to the Cuban men who were jailed in the U.S.

That evening we worshiped at one of First Havana's "house churches" of a family in the outlying fishing village of Cojimar where Ernest Hemingway wrote *Old Man and the Sea*.

First Havana helps its community deal with economic hardship by offering special programs and opening their sanctuary for meditation daily. On Wednesday, we met with the psychologists who staff "The Friendly Phone," a counseling service and hotline. Years ago when it opened, it was unique in that capital city of more than two million people. Although Cubans have free basic medical care, they are living without money, possessions and power. People still struggle with depression, alcoholism, divorce, and fear of job loss.

We also had the opportunity to visit another Presbyterian Church in a Havana suburb. La Fernanda Presbyterian Church is the newest Presbyterian Church in Cuba, having started as a "house mission" as part of Luyanó Presbyterian Church.

Young adults occupied center stage on Thursday night in First Havana's

*Continued on back page*

## Washington Post Exposes Realco Guns

by Rev. John T. Mathison

The latest predictable American massacre in Newtown, CT has touched all of us, and made obvious the need for change in how our country treats guns—their sale and distribution, their possession and use.

For the past two years, embraced by the General Assembly of the PCUSA in 2010, Heeding God's Call, the multifaceted, grassroots movement, has sought with growing success to play an activist role in preventing gun violence. Heeding God's Call believes that leadership from the faith community is critical to change, as it has been to many important changes in our country's history.

For those in doubt, the *Washington Post* documented the misuse of weapons purchased at Realco Guns on Marlboro Pike in District Heights, MD when they learned that 2,500 crimes in Washington, D.C. and Maryland had their origin at Realco Guns. Eighty-six guns sold by Realco have been linked to homicide cases during the past 20 years, far outstripping the total from any other gun store in the region.

Realco is known as a leading seller of "crime guns" seized by local police, and the year-long *Washington Post* investigation revealed the magnitude of Realco's pattern and the link between guns sold by the store and specific crimes. That is why NYAPC members have joined with others in weekly protests outside Realco Guns on the second and fourth Monday from 4:00-5:00 PM. Transportation is coordinated at Thomas Circle with cars leaving from the Bistro at 3:15 every second and fourth Monday and returning by 5:45 PM. We invite members and friends of NYAPC to join us.

## Cuba Coffee in the Park Celebrated Inside

by Marilyn Seiber



For the second consecutive summer, the Cuba Partners and Triangle Park Committees hosted a "Cuba Coffee in the Park," though rain forced us inside. The event highlighted "our" park (actually owned by the U.S. National Park Service, but maintained in part with NYAPC) and celebrated our Cuba partnership with First Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Havana. The 'coffee' was held after the worship service and featured Cuban music and displays, real Cuban coffee, tropical fruits, a Tres Leches cake, and socializing.

## "And the Word Was Made Flesh..."

by Dennis Hobb

This is sort of an unusual topic for a summer newsletter, and especially so coming from a mental health agency. Many of you here at The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church know that it has been anything but a typical year for McClendon Center consumers in the Day Program.

For over a year, the city government had been making plans to discontinue funding the Day Program through one city agency (Health Care Finance), and to finance it through another, the Department of Mental Health (DMH). This might not seem significant, except that different rules apply from one agency to the next. In the old funding system, our consumers could come for as long as they wanted and needed to be here. Under DMH, they are restricted to 90 days at a time. What had been especially troubling about this for us was that, historically, many consumers would be denied for either a second or third 90-day period of time. There had also been an understanding that DMH would allow consumers to come for only 180 days of the 250 days we're open each

year, leaving a significant number of days that they would be unable to access the Day Program.

Funding has not been an issue since there is money in the city budget for this program; these changes were being made for regulatory purposes. The McClendon Center was never threatened with closing; we'd like to think that we're here to stay. Our concern, and especially on the part of our Board of Directors, was regarding the neediest consumers in the District, since they are the ones who come to the Day Program the most frequently and for a long period of time. If our request to serve them beyond 90 days was denied, or if they could only get part of the year approved to attend, what would these people do with their days away from us?

"*And the Word became flesh.*" This verse from John's Gospel resonates with the actions taken by many of you at the church on behalf of our consumers. When you heard that the most vulnerable were threatened with not being able to attend the Day Program, you made phone calls, sent emails, and wrote letters to

your City Council members. Your *words* called a resolution *into being*—you helped to bring forth a solution for our consumers. Because of your actions, city officials met with our Board Chair and NYAPC member, Sarah Barclay Hoffman, and responded *in writing* that DMH would not restrict the number of days any of our consumers can attend the Day Program. This has been an incredible turn of events, and I can't tell you how pleased I am that the congregation acted so strongly on our behalf.

To me, the Word becoming flesh is more than just a Christmas message. It means that when words are spoken, and spoken strongly, they become a reality and can change things for the better. Thank you for speaking strongly on behalf of our consumers and for making something very good happen for them. I know it's the wrong season of the year, but regardless of that, you have given McClendon Center the best Christmas present I can imagine. Thank you, thank you, NYAPC. And Merry Christmas to you all!

## On the Lookout for John Brown's Spear

by Paul Dornan

We all know how The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church is a historical treasure house, but who knows what lies hidden in some nook or cranny of our church building? Take for instance, the items that were displayed in the 1859 building during the 1903 Centennial of the NYAPC congregation. The Centennial was celebrated over a four-day span in November of that year, and among those who addressed the celebrants were then-President Theodore Roosevelt, Supreme Court Justice John Harlan, President Lincoln's personal secretary, John Hay, and then-pastor of the congregation, Wallace Radcliffe.

As part of the festivities, the organizers arranged a Centennial Historical Exhibit with various items in the church's possession or temporary gifts offered for the occasion. Five items in particular pique my interest. Is it possible that any of these items, at that time within the church walls, still reside in some corner of the church building?

1. John Brown's spear, used during the raid at Harper's Ferry and presented to President Lincoln when his family rented a pew at The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church;
2. Canes presented by President Lincoln to Dr. Phineas Gurley, pastor of The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church and confidante of President Lincoln;
3. A copy of Mr. Lincoln's marriage license;
4. Dr. Gurley's flute, used by him when a member of Seminary Choir at Princeton; and
5. A table which belonged to John Quincy Adams, presented by his widow to a member of the Second Church (a predecessor congregation to New York Avenue). In the corner of one of the drawers is the autograph of "J.Q. Adams," which he wrote there, in ink, about 1842.

So, if you find yourself in a little known and scarcely frequented part of the church and happen upon what looks like an old spear, you may have discovered a priceless heirloom, heretofore unidentified. Keep your eyes peeled and your imaginations open!

### New Contact Information for Director of Planned Giving and Special Gifts

The Session approved the appointment of Cathy Schultheis to Director of Planned Giving and Special Gifts effective May 1, 2013. She succeeds Evelyn Ying Lewis, who has returned to work with the U.S. Government.

Questions and requests for information on Estate Planning, Special Gifts, the Birthday Fund and Beyond the Budget giving opportunities should now be directed to Cathy:

Catherine E. Schultheis  
12601 Two Farm Drive  
Silver Spring, MD 20904  
Phone: 301-622-3149  
Email: ceks12601@yahoo.com

There is also a Planned Giving mailbox in the church office.

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

## NYAPC Letter to Presbyterian Church in Baghdad

Rev. Farouk Hammo

June 9, 2013

Elder Yousif al-Saka

The Arabic Presbyterian Church in Baghdad

Dear Rev. Hammo and Elder al-Saka:

On behalf of the congregation and pastors of The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., the **Peace and Justice Committee** wishes to convey its deep concern and anguish over the increasing violence and death of innocents that are occurring in Baghdad and Iraq in general.

We grieve with you over the senseless deaths and injuries of so many victims. We hold you in our hearts and pray for you as fellow Presbyterians and Christians. We pray for all Iraqis who only want peace and stability in their daily lives and the security that is owed to all citizens, families and children. We pray for the safety of Christians in Iraq, that they will not be further targeted and forced to leave their homeland. We pray for the end of sectarian violence that is growing in Iraq and the region.

May you know and be assured that you have friends at The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church who are thinking of you and praying for you. May God keep you and hold you in His grace and love.

Your brothers and sisters in Christ,

The Peace and Justice Committee

## Cuba Corner

by Marilyn Seiber

### Meet: Maria del Carmen Blasco Ruiz—Carmina!

As a central presence for NYAPC groups visiting our partner church, First Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Havana, Carmina is the English-speaking guide and go-to person for explanations, church and Cuban history, and any help NYAPC visitors might need. She is a long-time member and elder of First Havana, lives just two blocks from the church, and is now employed by the Synod, the national Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba.



Carmina has a fascinating family history, and like many Cubans, has family from both Cuba and Spain. She was born and raised in Havana. Her father, who recently passed away in December 2012, was born in Spain, and her mother was born in Cuba. She has a sister living in Barcelona, Spain, and Carmina lives with her mother and aunt in Cuba. Her paternal grandfather was from Malaga, Spain and was a cousin of the artist Picasso. That makes Carmina third cousin to Picasso! Her paternal grandmother is from Cuba. On her mother's side, her grandfather was from Galicia, Spain, and grandmother was from the Canary Islands. Several years ago, Carmina went to Spain for her first family reunion, and it was a huge gathering and celebration!

She has had an interesting professional career in economics supported by an accounting degree from the University of Havana—and propelled by her excellent knowledge of, and facility for, the English language. Carmina studied English in high school and had a tutor. She considered majoring in English language at the university, but her first choice was to be an architect. As “major selections” go at Cuban universities, architecture was filled, so she studied civil engineering. Later, she decided that she did not like it and switched to accounting. Her first job—that lasted 24 years!—was as an economist in Havana for a commercial organization of restaurants, night clubs, and hospitality. Her next job, for three years, was as an accountant for a private Spanish association. Now she works for the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba as its accountant.

Growing up Presbyterian, Carmina became the youngest church member of First Havana at age 15. She became an elder near the end of the 1970s.

Her favorite pastimes are reading, watching movies, swimming at the beach, dancing, listening to music, and talking with friends.

### Cuban Interests Section and U.S. State Department Brief NYAPC Group to Cuba

In preparation for their April 15-22 trip to Cuba, the NYAPC delegation received briefings from the Cuban Interests Section and the U.S. Department of State on respective policies and political-economic conditions in Cuba.



On March 18, First Secretary Jesús Perz Calderón welcomed the group to the Cuban Interests Section. He described the changing laws and economic situation in Cuba, detailing how Cubans are now able to work privately and establish their own businesses. Nearly 500,000 employees of the government are losing their positions and will need to find private means of employment. Sr. Perz said that the Cuban government is willing to sit down with U.S. counterparts to discuss any issues, but the biggest stumbling block is the “Cuban Five”—five men imprisoned in the U.S. for spying.

On April 9, Jeffery A. Salaiz, Deputy Director of the Office of the Coordinator for Cuban Affairs, briefed the NYAPC delegation. Mr. Salaiz said that cooperation exists between U.S. and Cuban authorities on major issues such as drug interdiction and maritime issues. He reported that President Obama wants increased engagement between Cubans and Americans, and the Administration is allowing increased academic exchanges and people-to-people licensed trips to Cuba. He reported that cooperative talks on issues of mutual interest stopped after the imprisonment of U.S. citizen Alan Gross, stating there will be no *quid pro quo* for release of Alan Gross and the Cuban Five.

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- **The PC(USA) Cuba Partners Network** will hold its annual meeting on September 18-21, 2013 in Houston at the Cenacle Retreat Center. Church officials from the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba, including the Moderator, will attend.
  - **The three young adults** from First Havana who were slated to visit NYAPC at the invitation of the NYAPC Session were denied U.S. visas by the U.S. Interests Section in Havana and therefore will not be in Washington, D.C. in August.

## Cynthia Bolbach's Legacy

by Cathy Schultheis

Cynthia Bolbach, known as Cindy to her friends, loved The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church. She became a Presbyterian and joined NYAPC in the 1970's, immediately becoming involved in the missions of the church, serving as a Deacon from 1974-1978 and an Elder from 1980-1985. She served on the Pastor Nominating Committee that called Edmund S. P. Jones to NYAPC in 1984 and was the Clerk of Session during his ministry.

After moving to Virginia, Cindy transferred her membership to First Presbyterian Church, Arlington, where she was elected Clerk of Session. At the General Assembly level, she served as co-moderator of the Form of Government Task Force (2006-2010). In 2010, Cindy, the only ruling elder in a field of six candidates, was elected Moderator of the 219th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

She told the commissioners, "I love being a Presbyterian elder. I cherish the equality that the church gives to ministers and elders. In fact, elder commissioners have an advantage: Elders rule!"

The Presbyterian News Service stated that Cindy's brief answers and her "win-some sense of humor" won over the Gen-

eral Assembly commissioners. The Rev. Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, described Cindy as "one of the most authentic faith leaders" he had ever known. He said that "she had a huge capacity for grace and conviction...loved to laugh and to listen...and was the best of us in every way."

Cindy was born in Lancaster County, PA, and was baptized and confirmed as a Lutheran. She had a hamster named Luther and a guinea pig named Calvin, indicating that she was predestined at an early age to be part of the Reformed tradition.

A graduate of Wittenberg University (Ohio) and Georgetown University Law Center, Cindy served as executive vice president and corporate secretary of BNA, Inc. She became a foster parent to teen-aged Jimmy in the 1980s. Her sister, Ann White, was an elder at NYAPC and her two nephews—one a priest in the D.C. area, the other a journalist in New York City—attended Sunday School at NYAPC.

In her address to the General Assembly in 2012, she stated her belief that the PC (USA) is "actively engaged and concerned with what God would have us do and be." She said that "at the heart of the gospel lies disciples...who are willing to

take risks, willing to do whatever it takes to help others see Jesus. Not just carry those whom they like, but maybe even those they don't know, those they don't like. Let's not worry about process and structure; instead, let's pray that we will be given the faith that Jesus saw in those disciples. Let's commit ourselves to be those disciples who will take risks, who will carry others up to the roof...If we commit ourselves to lift someone we don't know, someone we don't like, we will soar on wings like eagles, we will run and not grow weary, we will walk and not grow faint because we will be helping people see Jesus. What more could we ask for?"

Cindy's estate plan included significant bequests to four Presbyterian Churches, including \$50,000 to NYAPC. She affirmed her belief in ministry in mission by specifying that the gifts were to become part of each congregation's operating budget and are intended to fund either new initiatives for mission and outreach or to expand existing initiatives in these areas.

We will advise the congregation how Cindy's generous gift will be used for mission and/or outreach in a future edition of AveNews. We are deeply grateful to Cindy for sharing her life and gifts with us in support of the work of NYAPC.

## NYAPC Marches With More Light/Open Doors in Capital Pride Parade

by Fritz von Fleckenstein

On June 8, NYAPC parishioners Karen Cook, Karen Milam and I marched with the More Light Presbyterians' (MLP) local group, Open Doors, in the Capital Pride Parade. We carried the NYAPC Peace and Justice Committee Banner, and were acknowledged by name at the reviewing stand.



The MLP contingent contained a number of young people, some of which were incredibly athletic, taking to running with their signs around our contingent. Everywhere we marched, we were greeted with loud cheers, and people told us how important it was that we marched in the parade. Along the way, we all saw friends, including Nathan Moon, who greeted us with great joy.

Although we didn't see much of the rest of the parade, we were preceded by a group with signs identifying themselves as "Mormons for Equality." Wandering about a bit before the parade, I saw many different churches, including Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists, Episcopalians, Jews and Muslims.



As usual, it was a wonderful experience.

## Session, Trustees Consider Building Renovations, Repairs

by Edie Snyder

The Session and the Board of Trustees for The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church met jointly on July 23 to discuss the significant restoration and repair work the Trustees have proposed for the church building. This informational meeting included the results from the congregational listening sessions conducted earlier in the month and a proposal from the Funds Development Cluster to engage in a major capital campaign beginning in early 2014 (see separate stories). The Session will convene again in August to vote on the Trustees' specific request for authorization to proceed with the replacement of the church's existing heating and air conditioning (HVAC) system and to repair and restore the building's exterior.

For the past 18 months, the Trustees have engaged outside experts to help the church determine what the building requires. CFR Engineering and Grunley Construction (the company repairing the Washington monument) have evaluated NYAPC's aging energy systems, the structural integrity of the building's exterior, and the condition of the interior beyond the already renovated Sanctuary and Lincoln Chapel. This work included a complete energy audit.

CFR and Grunley's conclusion, buttressed by church members who are architects and engineers and who have generously given their time to review our contractors' work, including Trustee Michele Holland and Hal Davis, Kendrick McCabe, and Jim Spearman: *We can no longer patch and fix; we are at a point of substantial restoration and renovation. This is particularly true of the present HVAC system and the church's exterior.*

The proposed renovations can be broken into three parts.

**1. Energy systems:** The major and most expensive piece of the proposed work is replacement of the entire HVAC system in NYAPC's 91,000-square-foot church building. The energy audit evaluated a number of approaches, including geothermal, solar, and wind. The proposed solution is a modular variable refrigerant (VRF) system that will enable local control of environments within the church. CFR Engineering projects that this new, more energy efficient system will reduce

the church's CO2 emissions by 58%, save up to \$70,000 a year in utility costs, and avoid the \$15,000 to \$20,000 in annual maintenance costs on a system so old (between 20 years for the air conditioning and 63 years for the boilers and pneumatic distribution system) that the church has difficulty finding parts for it, let alone locating engineers with sufficient knowledge of the system to repair it.

**2. Exterior restoration and repair:** The building has serious mortar problems in its limestone (with water leaking behind and freezing in the winter, causing more damage and one major crack from the sidewalk to the roof line on the New York Avenue side of the building and a similar crack on the H Street side). These cracks show how the front of the church is separating from its sides. These structural issues will become more serious problems if they are not addressed in the next year. Other major exterior expenses include cleaning the entire church, restoring the limestone, servicing the steeple, repairing the broken limestone steps, replacing all of the very large exterior windows covering the sanctuary windows, and refinishing all of the exterior doors. The window replacement will greatly enhance energy savings and also permit the stained glass windows to be seen from the outside, giving the whole church a facelift so that it can serve once again as a beacon to all in downtown DC.



**3. Interior restoration and repair:** Some of the work is critical (such as repairing walls and ceilings that will be damaged with the installation of the new HVAC system); some of this restoration relates to safety upgrades, such as new doors and door handles (crash bars) into the exit stairwells; and some proposed upgrades involve plumbing. The Trustees have also explored significant bathroom renovations since the church is increas-

ingly experiencing major plumbing issues. Ultimately, though, the Board and the Session determined that the congregation needs to be consulted further about how much of the interior should be renovated or repaired before the church has fully "visioned" the role NYAPC might play in this location in the future. Fortunately, the interior work is the most flexible in terms of "needs" versus "wants."

### Cost and Timing

The cost of this project breaks down as follows: (1) HVAC replacement: between \$2 million and \$2.5 million; (2) exterior renovations and repair: \$1 million; and (3) interior restoration and repair: from \$500,000 to \$2.5 million and up, depending on what the congregation and its leadership decide to undertake. **The immediate project total for the HVAC and exterior renovations and repairs is therefore \$3.5 million. We will need further study and conversation to determine the scope, and thus the price, for the interior work.**

While the Trustees anticipate that we will need to borrow money to complete this initial phase of the project in a timely and cost-effective manner, *ultimately the congregation and friends of the church will need to pay for this work.* Accordingly, the Funds Development Cluster, in consultation with the Trustees, has begun to develop a significant capital campaign designed to address not only this immediate need, but also the long-term requirements of the church (see separate article).

If the Session authorizes the Trustees to move forward, contracts would be negotiated and signed and financing secured in the next four to five months, with the HVAC replacement work and the exterior renovations beginning soon after. Grunley Construction, which would serve as NYAPC's general contractor, indicated that this work will take six months to complete. We do not anticipate having to move during construction, although some temporary relocation within the building may be necessary for the HVAC work.

Meantime, the Trustees and Session anticipate that conversations will continue regarding the congregation's vision for the church going forward and the resulting scope and timing of the interior work.

## Building the Future: A Mortgage and a Capital Campaign

by Edie Snyder

The Board of Trustees and the Funds Development Cluster expect to employ a variety of means to fund proposed renovations of NYAPC. Those means will likely include the assumption of a mortgage to complete replacement of the building's heating and air conditioning (HVAC) systems and exterior repairs and renovations within a year, and the launch of a major capital campaign to meet the comprehensive long-term financial needs of the church.

The Trustees proposed to the Session at the boards' joint meeting on July 23 that the church borrow the funds to pay for the \$3.5 million HVAC replacement and exterior refurbishment with the goal of finishing this work in 2014. Such a loan requires approval of the Presbytery; while the congregation owns the building and the land on which it sits, the church does so in trust for the Presbytery.

While the Trustees are exploring a variety of financing mechanisms in detail, at this point a commercial loan will probably be most advantageous to the church. As currently envisioned, \$700,000 would need to be drawn from our unrestricted endowment or funded by some other means to pay the 20 percent down payment required for a construction loan. The Trustees are exploring loan possibilities with Presbytery and at least three banks and plan to assemble a task force of financial experts from the congregation to evaluate the available loan options.

### An Expansive and Inter-Relational Approach

At the same time, the Funds Development Cluster has outlined plans for a significant capital campaign. As initially conceived, the campaign would address multiple needs, including the proposed HVAC and exterior renovations, significant interior renovations of the building, and an endowment to continue the programs presently funded by the annual operating budget and to respond to new challenges and opportunities.

Such a campaign would be in addition to annual stewardship, not an alternative to annual giving. Equally critical to the success of the campaign, however, would be funding sources beyond NYAPC's annual pledgers; this effort would necessarily involve funds from individuals who are drawn to the church but are not members and corporate donors that share NYAPC's values and interests. The campaign would take what the cluster calls an "expansive and inter-relational community approach" to fundraising.

Everyone in the community would be involved—the congregation, pastors, pastoral associates, and staff; children, youth, adults young and older; single people, those who are married, and those with children. The campaign would reach out to inactive members and to former members and children of the church. The cluster further anticipates that the campaign would involve three volunteer co-chairs and two professional consultants—specifically a paid executive director for the campaign and a grant writer who would pursue program funding as well as capital funding.

The Funds Development Cluster emphasizes that this plan is in its infancy, and the initial ideas will be developed further for Session discussion at the August 13 meeting.

## Listening Sessions Support HVAC, Exterior Work, Invite a Larger Conversation on Interior Renovations

by Edie Snyder

More than 125 members of the congregation and friends of NYAPC met following Sunday worship services in July to consider the church building's needs and purpose in the context of NYAPC's vision and mission. Several themes emerged from these discussions. The quotes in italics are representative of what has been

said thus far and are included to give voice to these summary points.

The location of NYAPC is critical to this church's witness in the heart of the nation's capital. The listening sessions affirmed the congregation's commitment to remain in this place. *"This specific geographical location is essential to the*

## Associate Pastor Nominating Committee Report

by Meg Neill

The Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC) has been meeting weekly since elected by the congregation in March. Since then, we have been getting to know each other, sharing our thoughts on the associate pastor position, and learning about the process of calling a pastor. Some may remember that a "Church Information Form" was previously used, but as of August 1, a new form will be in use—a "Ministry Information Form" (MIF)—so the committee has been working to complete that form without any models to draw from. The NYAPC Session approved the MIF at its July meeting, and as of this writing, the form is with National Capital Presbytery for approval; we understand that this is usually a short process.

Once we have all the necessary approvals, the MIF will be added to the PC(USA) database to be matched with pastors seeking a call. They also have a new form to complete.

The matching process is not the only way we receive applicants. The MIF will be linked from the NYAPC website, and we plan to place ads in a few Presbyterian publications and to contact seminaries. We also encourage the congregation to refer any potential candidates to us.

We appreciate the congregation's understanding as we work through this long and confidential process.

NYAPC APNC: Chair-Mary Spatz; Vice-Chair-John Gagosian; Presbytery liaison-Michael Volpe, Falls Church Presbyterian Church; Members: Will Ashworth, Kathy Doan, Kevin Guy, David Hoff, Olivia Lewis, Karen Milam, Meg Neill, Edie Snyder.

*identity of this church in a way that location is not for many other churches."*

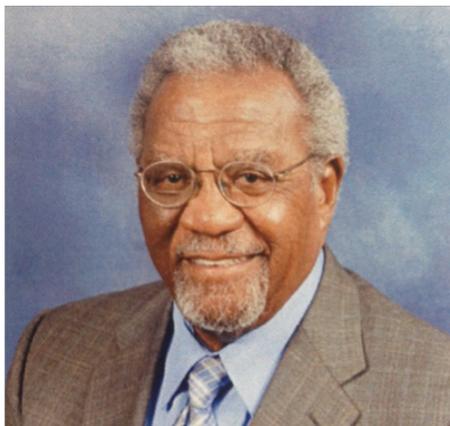
While this is the third church building at this location, the current structure holds significant historical and personal value. In addition, NYAPC's resources would be

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## History Happens . . . at NYAPC: Carl Dees

by Edie Snyder

*As part of the NYAPC History Committee's "Bicentennial Interviews Project," Marilyn Seiber and Edie Snyder interview long-time members for the Archives files. They interviewed Carl Dees on June 30, 2013 for this project and for the article below.*



It was Palm Sunday in April 1962, and Carl and Billie Dees and their young daughter Carla were driving, looking for 15<sup>th</sup> Street Presbyterian Church. But somehow they missed 15<sup>th</sup> Street. As they rounded the corner of 13<sup>th</sup> Street NW and New York Avenue, Billie exclaimed, "There's a Presbyterian church!" The family did not want to be late for service, so they parked their car and stood in line to enter The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church.

"The church was packed and the choir loft was full," Carl recalls. "Because of where we grew up, Billie and I understood [Rev. Dr.] Jack McClendon's southern accent, but the Scottish brogues of [Rev. Dr.] George Docherty and Angus Logan made it a challenge to know what they were saying." Afterwards, Carl was resting against a post outside the church when member Lowell Miller asked him, "Do you think Mr. Lincoln would mind you leaning on his post?" Carl had no idea that NYAPC was Abraham Lincoln's church. Billie and Carl decided to join the church in 1965, the year their second daughter, Valerie, was born.

### "Convert" to Presbyterianism

Carl and Billie were born and raised in North Carolina and met at North Carolina A&T State University where Carl majored in chemistry. Carl went to NCAT following service in the U.S. Air Force from 1950 to 1954 during the Korean War. The Dees were married in 1956 and

lived in Buffalo, New York from 1958 to 1962 where they were members of the First Presbyterian Church. "Billie was born into the Presbyterian church," Carl says with a smile. "I was raised a Baptist, but converted."

In 1962, the Dees came to Washington for a job with the Bureau of Mines at the U.S. Department of the Interior. In 1964, Carl moved to the Patent and Trademark Office at the Department of Commerce, which he retired from 30 years later.

From 1969 to 1970, Carl participated in a NYAPC commission to produce a report, "Mission and Program for the 70s," detailing steps for the church to become a truly multi-racial faith community. At about the same time, "Jack [McClendon] talked me into being a Deacon," and Carl served from 1970 to 1976. "I enjoyed a great relationship with Jack," says Carl, calling him "one of a kind." When Rev. Docherty retired in 1976, Carl was asked to be a member of the Pastor Nominating Committee that ultimately called Rev. Arthur R. McKay as senior pastor. Carl also served on the Session for three six-year terms between 1978 and 2001, while Billie served from 1996 to 1998 on what is now the Board of Diaconal Ministers.

### Exciting Times at NYAPC

Thinking back over these years, Carl highlights the decision of Revs. Docherty and McClendon to journey to Selma, Alabama to march with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He remembers Docherty's subsequent sermons of that period, notably "This Was Selma, Alabama," preached during Lent 1965. Carl also recalls the "Poor People's Campaign" for which NYAPC served as the information center in 1968. "We opened our doors, and there were people everywhere."

He heard Rev. King speak both while in college and from NYAPC's pulpit just weeks before King's assassination. And he recalls with regret the Session debate about whether to close the church when Washington, D.C. declared King's birthday a holiday. "We had a knockdown, drag out fight in Session. We made the

right decision and observed the holiday, but it was a tough discussion." Nonetheless, Carl says of those years, "It was an exciting time!"

### Driving for Meals on Wheels

Carl values the church's outreach and social justice ministries. Among the many missions of the church, Carl became involved in "Meals on Wheels," serving as a driver for that program for 15 years. "I thought Meals on Wheels was a tremendous undertaking and felt both a shock and a letdown when that ministry ended." Begun in 1971, Meals on Wheels delivered its last meal in December 2009 after 38 years of service. Billie, meantime, was very much involved in the Radcliffe Room ministry.

For Carl, an important aspect of NYAPC over the years has been its ministers' prophetic preaching—from George Docherty to Rev. Roger J. Gench. He notes sermons from Rev. McKay and Rev. Edmund S. P. Jones and remembers the power of the message delivered by guest preacher Allan Aubrey Boesak, a South African Dutch Reformed Church cleric, politician and anti-apartheid activist.

Ever close to Carl's heart, though, has been the church's music program, which Billie "always said sustained me." He joined the choir in 1967 and still sings bass in the choir today. He has thoroughly enjoyed both the sacred and the secular music that the choir has performed. He encourages people to take part in what he has so enjoyed and hopes the church can find a way to increase its numbers of volunteer singers.

Today, music and mission come together for Carl when he comes to choir practice on Thursday evenings and sees students and tutors arriving for the Community Club's study hall. Carl is a long-time supporter of the Club through the New York Avenue Foundation, the independent nonprofit organization that supports the Club and other programs for the educational advancement of youth in need throughout Washington, DC. "Community Club," he says, "is just amazing."

## Njoro Journey

by Beth Braxton

Fifteen members and friends of NYAPC, under the leadership of our Parish Associate, Beth Braxton, were commissioned Sunday, August, 4 for a two-week mission trip to Njoro, Kenya to share in the ministry of the P.C.E.A. (Presbyterian Church of East Africa) Njoro Church's work with vulnerable and orphan children. The team has been meeting monthly to prepare primarily for running a "Holiday" Bible School. This will be a wonderful opportunity for the team to personally get to know the children the church has been supporting for several years.



The team is planning activities in Crafts, Music and Drama for the children, as well as time for games together and a Worship/Bible story period. Our theme is "One in the Spirit: Reaching Out to the World," with stories to include: The Good Samaritan – Luke 10, The Woman at the Well – John 4, Feeding the 5,000 – Matthew 14/John 6 and Abraham and the Three Visitors – Genesis 18.

We ask the church to support us in prayer. The members of the group include:

Beth and Bob Braxton  
 Kristin and Matt Ford  
 Martha Davis and Habib Takele  
 Laura and Jim Turner  
 Sarah Williamson  
 Karen Milam  
 Shamika Bradley (Assistant Director of Community Club)  
 Molly Lauer  
 Marsha Renwanz  
 Carol Casperson  
 Susan Kipp, nurse and member of Burke Presbyterian Church

## Listening Sessions

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better spent in support of the church's vision and mission to renovate and prepare to support it, rather than to replace it (\$27 million and up for a new building). The majority of the congregation does not want to tear down the present building. ***"The church is part of a river of liberation and striving for equality. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke here. The Poor People's Campaign found refuge here." "I was married here. The present missions of this church all began in this sanctuary. I am dedicated to this building."***

Few question the need to replace the existing heating and air conditioning (HVAC) system or to move forward with exterior renovations and repairs. ***"The sooner we get going on the HVAC system, the better."***

If NYAPC is going to spend significant dollars on the building's interior, a larger conversation should be had about what we, the church, want to be and do. Reconfiguration of this space emerged as critical to NYAPC's future. Even though it will cost more money to break the project into two phases—HVAC and exterior first and then the interior—it is more important that the church get the interior renovations right. ***"Until we have a good understanding of our vision and mission, it's better not to do the interior work. We need to do some visioning; we need to be thoughtful in community rather than just doing stuff to make the church look nice."***

Initial ideas for the interior ranged from better accommodating the McClendon Center ministry; improving the space provided for church school, meetings, "talking spaces," and weddings; revamping the small kitchen between the Lincoln Parlor and the John Quincy Adams room; and making use of currently unused balcony space to housing a daycare center; enhancing a fledgling contemplative ministry; creating a functional area for the church archives and effectively displaying our history; providing places and equipment for people to change and wash clothes; and retrofitting the Radcliffe Room with better electronics to increase its attractiveness to outside groups. ***"I love the idea of a childcare center, maybe subsidized for people with lower incomes. We would be utilizing more of our space more of the time."***

## Transitions

### Deaths

Robert A. McFarland, April  
 Dr. O. H. Peterson, April  
 Harry F. Jackson, May 1  
 Florence Wilson Quinn, May 20  
 Gene Ricardo Vaughan, May 23  
 Martha Eaves, June  
 Elizabeth Campbell Mahler, June 14  
 Suzanne Hall, June  
 Mary Ann Porter Minich, June 9  
 Lora Quinn, June 27  
 Bernice Worrell McCloud, June

### Births

Cole MacDougall Noellert, April  
 Felix Dominic McKee Wieseler, May 12  
 Sabrina Suarez, April 29  
 Charlotte Drake Olson, May 20  
 Ambrose Rigel Yoder Danewitz, July 9  
 William Rice Campbell, July 10

### Baptisms

Aidan Christian Shannon, born April 5, 2011, baptized June 16  
 Fiona Caroline McIver, born July 7, 2012, baptized March 31



Members of the Triangle Park Committee—Bob Doan, Beth DuMez, Marilyn Seiber, Courtney and Jim Spearman, Barry Tindall—gathered in Triangle Park on Saturday, March 9, to do spring cleanup and prepare the park for the NYAPC Easter Sunrise Service on March 31 and Earth Day Coffee-in-the Park on April 21.

This conversation has just begun. If you have ideas about this project that you wish to share, please email Hal Hiemstra, President, Board of Trustees at [hhiemstra@balljanik.com](mailto:hhiemstra@balljanik.com). Please contact Jim Spearman, Chair, Funds Development Cluster, at [jamespearman@netscape.net](mailto:jamespearman@netscape.net) or Mike Smith, Chair, Finance Committee, at [mike@happysmith.com](mailto:mike@happysmith.com) with thoughts about how to fund this work.

## *A Miracle for Today*

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sanctuary. With soloists, instrumental music, readings and testimonials, they led “One More for Christ” before a multigenerational audience. Ecumenical and inter-racial, these youth performed with evangelical fervor confirming Martin Luther’s belief that a song remains in one’s heart longer than a sermon. The youngest among them hopes to be a pastor someday.

On Friday, these same young adults spent one day of their spring vacation with us. Beach-ready, we picnicked and sang *Guantanamera*, explored the Malecón promenade, visited the famous Hotel Nacional, and held a surprise party for Lauren Dwyer of Church of the Pilgrims complete with piñata, birthday cake, dancing and games!

On Sunday morning, we arrived at the church for a prayer service, followed by Sunday School classes and fellowship over coffee in the courtyard before worship. During the service, Rev. Méndez introduced our group, at which time we presented to him and the congregation a packet containing articles about NYAPC, President Abraham Lincoln along with a copy in Spanish of the new movie “Lincoln.”

Rev. Méndez then preached on the story of the Apostle Peter’s resurrection of Tabitha, the only woman disciple mentioned in the New Testament. Known for her kindness, she had died unexpectedly (Acts 9:36-43), and the Apostle Peter had revived her. Word of this miracle spread, “and many came to believe in the Lord.”

Whether we are in Havana, Joppa or Washington, our eyes are opened by an act of revelation. First Presbyterian of Havana is a miracle of “Light in the City” faithful in its mission and service to Christ. Thanks be to God!

## Israel Palestine Preview

*by Matthew Asada*

NYAPC Members Matthew Asada, Dianne English, and Stephanie Simpson recently returned from two-week trips to Israel and Palestine. Over the next couple of months they will be sharing their experiences in an upcoming AveNews article and Sunday school class. Stay tuned for more on the trip and how you can get involved with this issue.

### Mark Your Calendars ...

**Sat, 9/28: Choral Workshop, 9:30 am.** Join NYAPC Choir and other area singers to work on vocal technique and sing some favorite hymns together. All are welcome!

**Sun, 9/29: Congregational Sunday, 10 am.** It’s the fifth Sunday of the month, so it’s time to get together for intergenerational fellowship. We’ll gather in Peter Marshall Hall for refreshments and activities relating to our church building. (Be ready to learn something new about our building!)



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