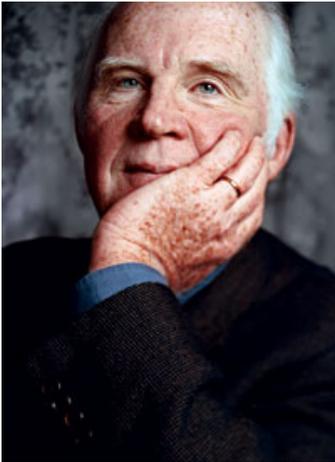


# AVENEWS

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

## Scholar-in-Residence Program to Feature Taylor Branch

by Paul Dornan



Taylor Branch, noted journalist and author of the magisterial three-volume study of the civil rights movement, *America in the King Years*, comes to the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church on the weekend of May 17, 2014 as McClendon Scholar in Residence. Mr. Branch will discuss “The Next Years,” drawing lessons from the civil rights movement about today’s manifestations of

racial, class and political inequalities and conflict.

The collaboration of four congregations, Mt. Lebanon Baptist, Emory Fellowship United Methodist, Luther Place Memorial and NYAPC, which lifted up Lent last year, will continue this spring. There will again be Lenten Discussions, using Mr. Branch’s recent compact version of the trilogy, *The King Years: Historic Moments in the Civil Rights Movement*, as the basis for large and small group conversations on three Saturday mornings, March 15, March 22 and April 5. Again, we will hold a joint worship service and choral celebration, with the choirs of all four churches participating, at 3 PM on Palm Sunday, April 13, at NYAPC.

The Scholar-in-Residence Council hopes and prays that our continued gathering, in groups large and small, will build trust and resolve within the Washington faith community. We’ll also be working with the Washington Interfaith Network to find ways that our trust and resolve will issue forth in faithful action.

## CALENDAR

**Feb. 22, 6-8 pm:** Game Night for All Ages in Peter Marshall Hall

**March 5:** Ash Wednesday Soup Supper, 6 pm, Worship Service, 7 pm

**March 6, 6:30 - 9:00 pm:** WIN Young DC Voters’ Action, All Souls Unitarian Church, 1500 Harvard St. NW

**Saturdays March 15, 22 & April 5, 10 am - 12pm:** Lenten book discussions with Mt. Lebanon, Emory Fellowship and Luther Place Memorial Church.

**Sunday March 30, 10 am:** “Getting to Know You” Congregational Sunday

**Saturday, April 12 :** Solitude Retreat (*TENTATIVE*)

**Sunday, April 13, 3 pm:** Joint Worship Service/Choral Celebration at NYAPC with Mt. Lebanon, Emory Fellowship and Luther Place Memorial Church.

**April 17:** Maundy Thursday Soup Supper, 6 pm, Worship Service, 7 pm

**April 18, 12 pm:** Good Friday Service

**April 19, 10 pm -12 am:** Easter Vigil in Lincoln Chapel

**April 20:** Easter



**Lent 2013: NYAPC, Mount Lebanon, Emory and a Boston church’s choirs.**

## Session Moves Forward with Building Renovations

by Edith Holmes Snyder

On December 10, its last meeting in 2013, the Session of The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church authorized the Board of Trustees to hire a project manager, secure a line of credit, and execute a contract to complete exterior renovations and upgrades to the church building so that it can continue to be a place of mission and ministry in Washington DC.

The Session's unanimous vote gave the Trustees a green light to sign a contract with JFW Project Management to represent NYAPC in renovating and upgrading the church's exterior and replacing its existing mechanical systems, including heating and air conditioning (HVAC). The Session also cleared the Trustees to sign a \$4 million line of credit with Branch Banking and Trust Company (BB&T) to complete these proposed renovations and upgrades and authorized the Trustees to complete negotiations and execute a \$915,000 contract with Grunley Construction, Inc. for the exterior work.

The Trustees will return to the Session early in this new year with an amendment to the contract with Grunley for the mechanical systems. If all goes as anticipated, the work on the outside of the building and NYAPC's HVAC systems will begin in April and should be finished by the end of the summer.

### Three Phases

The Session's unanimous vote is the latest step forward in two years of work by the Trustees with professional engineers and construction firms to conduct detailed building studies, analyze ways to replace the church's failing mechanical systems, and renovate or upgrade its exterior and interior.

For the past 12 months, the Trustees have met with church boards and members of the congregation to discuss the work the building requires so that it can continue to house current and future missions and ministries. Congregational listening sessions last July and a "Get to Know Your Building" tour in September helped members understand the scope of the work to be done and confirmed the congregation's desire to remain a witness in the heart of the city [see *AveNews*, August 2013 and October 2013].

These conversations also led to the development of a three-phased approach to making significant building renovations and upgrades to NYAPC. The project is now structured as follows: Phase I – Exterior Renovations and Upgrades, Phase II – Mechanical System Upgrades and Replacement, and Phase III – Interior Building Upgrades and Renovations.

Session adoption of the proposed Trustees resolution in December involves Phases I and II only; Phase III will depend on continued prayerful consideration by the congregation throughout the year ahead on the ministries the church should continue and

undertake and the best configuration of the building's interior to accommodate them. Last fall, the Session created a visioning committee to lead this effort.

### Finances and Negotiations

In August 2013, the Session authorized the Trustees to identify the most cost effective financing strategy for the project overall and to negotiate construction contracts to complete Phases I and II. The Trustees engaged the services of law firm Steptoe and Johnson to analyze existing church endowment funds and determine their eligibility for use as collateral to secure financing. The Board explored several financing options, including mortgaging the building and borrowing from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or commercial lenders, before finally recommending the line of credit with BB&T as the most cost effective and least risky strategy for financing Phases I and II.

Ultimately, the church will conduct a major capital campaign to pay for this work and to build the endowment to continue the programs presently funded by the annual operating budget and to respond to new challenges and opportunities. The Funds Development Cluster is overseeing development of the capital campaign.

Because of the project's complexity and on the advice and counsel of qualified members of the congregation, the Trustees also solicited proposals for project management services, interviewed three potential firms, and selected JFW, Inc. to act as NYAPC's "Owner's Representative" for Phases I and II.

Meanwhile, the Trustees and other qualified contract specialists who are members of NYAPC have continued to negotiate with Grunley Construction and CFR Engineering, the company that performed a detailed energy audit of the church. They have reviewed multiple draft contracts and are now ready to finalize the \$915,000 contract to complete Phase I.

In these efforts to identify a firm to represent the church with its contractors and to negotiate the contract with Grunley, the Trustees appreciate the assistance of church members Hal Davis, Kendrick McCabe, Richard Snyder, and Jim Spearman and thank them for lending their time and talents to this work.

## Maintenance Suggestion Form

There is a form kept at the front desk on which you can note any suggestions that you have for maintenance, such as burnt out light bulbs or the like. I once used it to complain about the lack of moving air in the church when the weather was in that in-between stage between hot and cold, as I had almost fainted several times while singing in the choir. Unfortunately, in that case, Judith informed me that we could not turn on the blowers without turning the coolers on as well!

— Fritz

## 2014 Annual Stewardship

by Jim Spearman

Thank you to over four hundred members, associates and friends who have already committed to their annual pledge for 2014! The text of this year's campaign theme is from 2 Corinthians 7:

*Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

A pledge to Annual Stewardship giving is a foundational act of faith and worship, both individually and collectively. And in our church annual stewardship giving is critical to each of the great things that happen here every day of the week.

Thank you again to all who have pledged already for 2014. If you have not yet pledged, it is never too late; please consider doing so today! You can contact CFO Angela Armstrong [angela.armstrong@nyapc.org](mailto:angela.armstrong@nyapc.org) or Annual Stewardship chair Carol Shannon directly, or pledge online at <https://nyapc.publishpath.com/2014-pledge-form>.

## 2013 Special Offerings

Organized by the Peace and Justice Committee

One Great Hour of Sharing	\$14,948
Peacemaking	\$9,056
Alternative Christmas Giving	\$7,232
Christmas Joy	\$1,663
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$32,899</b>

Thank you for your contributions. \$2,264, or one quarter of the Peacemaking Offering, remained at NYAPC for activities of the Peace and Justice Committee. The rest leaves our church to support programs in the Presbytery, the nation and the wider world.

### WIN Jobs Action: February 6, 2014

Music at 6:30 pm, Action 7:00 to 9:00 pm

First Rock Baptist Church, 4630 Alabama Ave SE

This action is part of the Jobs Campaign and will address:

- \*Increasing local hiring on DC Water projects to create 1,000+ careers for unemployed residents
- \*Local hiring at \$1 billion PEPCO project
- \*Fair wages
- \*Employment of returning citizens

Limited shuttle buses from downtown will be available. Contact [votewindc@gmail.com](mailto:votewindc@gmail.com) to request transportation or more information. Rides generally leave downtown around 5:45 pm.

## Mary Louise Engel

by Cathy Schultheis, Director of Planned Giving/Special Gifts

Mary Louise Engel joined The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church October 12, 1969. Previously she had been a member of National Presbyterian Church where she was active in the Sunday Evening Club for single young adults. It was at National that she became good friends with Jenean McKay. Jenean was Mary Louise's neighbor in Foggy Bottom, and it was Mary Louise who hosted a bridal shower for Jenean nearly fifty years ago!

Mary Louise was a graduate of the George Washington University and a member of Phi Beta Kappa there. Her career was with the U.S. Government as a research librarian. An avid reader with an eclectic taste in literature, she acquired an enormous collection of books on a wide variety of subjects. She was a member of the Washington Science Fiction Association, the oldest science fiction club in the greater Washington area, and actively participated in their meetings dealing with all types of science fiction, future and fantasy literature, as well as science fiction films.

Mary Louise was an avid shopper. She especially enjoyed going to the Gem and Mineral shows and always seemed to find just the right piece of jewelry to take home. The historic Garfinckel's Department Store located just blocks from NYAPC was one of her favorite shopping venues. Friends fondly remember her telling them, "You'll know I'm dead if there is a sale at Garfinckel's and I don't move!"

She loved cats and adopted many of them through the years. They were her family and she provided for them should they survive her--they were to be adopted by good friends such as Lenora Thierry!

Mary Louise attended NYAPC's Presbyterian Women meetings whenever she could. Members say they highly valued her insights and contributions to their study of the Bible.

I heard laughter and happiness in the voices of those who shared memories of Mary Louise with me. She was a person I wish I had known better. We are glad that Mary Louise loved The NYAPC so much that she gave her Alexandria townhouse and many of her books to the Church. Her unrestricted bequest to the Church amounted to \$170,282.93 after final expenses were paid. She died January 22, 2012. We thank God for the life of Mary Louise Engel.

## We all have a name

by T. Sanders, *the Faces of the Homeless Speakers Bureau*

One of the first and most important things that happens when we are born is we get a name. Usually sight unseen, we are given names that are sometimes steeped in tradition. When I saw the flyer about this year's memorial, honoring a man in death simply known as John Doe, it broke my heart on many different levels. All of our lives, our names are very important. To die and no one knows your name is heart-wrenching. As we all do, I have more questions than answers. The most profound question would be: how could no one know that you're missing and not go look for you? Well, we all know the answer. Some homeless people, on purpose or not, have fallen so far off the radar that they aren't missed. Even knowing the answer doesn't make it less devastating.

So today, as we publicly mourn/honor those who may have been forgotten, I want you to think about who's here. If you are still here, you still have a chance to be remembered, but for what? Each and every one of us has our own distinct journey that got us here; sadly, though, we don't all believe that there is value in our journey. Own your journey. It is only then that you begin to see what you're missing and hopefully begin fighting for what you deserve. Housing. No one should die homeless on the street. No one should die homeless on the street without a name.

What I learned as a little girl was, that you have to make a name for yourself. Make a footprint in this world so deep that you won't be easily forgotten. We all are valuable and we must all fight. We are paying our respects for homeless people that died on the street this past year. Let us remember that the new year for next year's memorial, starts today. Wouldn't it be great to not have to have a memorial next year because it will be unnecessary? So, all of us, let's get to work if you haven't started or keep working if you have. Deeds not words!

*(Ms. Sanders made these remarks at The 24th Annual National Homeless Persons Memorial Day service held at The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church on December 20, 2013. The names of 26 people who died while homeless in and around the nation's capital in 2013 were read, including the unidentified John Doe.)*



## AVENEWS

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

## Mary Had a Baby, yes Lord!

by Molly Johnson Wagner

This year's Christmas Pageant, on December 15, was once again a celebration of our youth's leadership in the church. Through the reading of the scripture and the offering of music, our wise people, shepherds, angels, and wiggly sheep recounted the Christmas story for all present.

The choral pieces sung by the children, "Go Tell It on The Mountain" (136), "Jesus, O What a Wonderful Child" (126) and "Mary Had a Baby" were all from a gospel tradition. In helping the children find a connection to the history of the songs, many of the youth easily understood the spiritual message of freedom and quickly made the leap to the celebration of Nelson Mandela's life that they were hearing about at school or in the news. I feel very fortunate to work with these insightful and talented children and look forward to future pageants.



## Committee Seeking a New Associate Pastor Begins Interviews

by Edith Holmes Snyder

NYAPC's Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC) is making progress in the church's search for our next associate pastor. The committee has received and read more than 100 personal information forms (PIFS) from prospective candidates since formally posting the position last August.

With the start of the new year, the APNC began interviews with leading applicants via Skype, a service that allows the committee to speak with candidates using voice and video over the Internet. All told, the APNC expects to use this technology to conduct between 10 and 15 interviews and aims to have these conversations completed by the end of February. The APNC is grateful to committee member David Hoff and David's employer, communications firm Hager Sharp, for making the Washington DC-based company's conference room and equipment available for this purpose.

Once the APNC has finished these interviews, the committee will decide on a short list of applicants. This list will be sent to the National Capital Presbytery for its required background checks of the candidates NYAPC wishes to pursue. The committee will next engage in in-person interviews.

If you would like to review the church's ministry information form describing NYAPC and the candidate we seek, please visit [www.nyapc.org](http://www.nyapc.org), About Us, Pastors & Staff, and finally Positions Available. The direct link to NYAPC's MIF is:

[http://nyapc.publishpath.com/Websites/nyapc/images/Position\\_Available\\_Final.pdf](http://nyapc.publishpath.com/Websites/nyapc/images/Position_Available_Final.pdf)

If you have any other questions about our process or progress, please contact Mary Spatz, chair of the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee, by telephone at 703-536-3268, or by email at

[nyapc.apnc@gmail.com](mailto:nyapc.apnc@gmail.com)

## Nelson Mandela and Community Club by Paul Dornan

*As the world mourns the loss of Nelson Mandela, Community Club remembers its small but special ties to the great South African leader. June Cartoon, a former tutor in the Club, returned to her home in South Africa during Mr. Mandela's presidency. She obtained an audience with Mr. Mandela. At that time, she shared her experiences in Community Club with him. As a token of his regard for our ministry, he sent along a picture of June and himself and an autographed letter to Community Club. The letter is dated April 22, 1992 and reads:*

"To my Friends at the New York Avenue Community Club:

Let me first extend my congratulations on the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the New York Avenue Community Club.

I have been informed of the Club's activities and commend you in your desire to stay in school, maintain good grades, and become fulfilled members of society. You are the leaders of tomorrow, and it remains your ultimate responsibility to ensure that you will obtain the education required to take a role in the destiny of your country.

On behalf of your brothers and sisters in South Africa, let me wish you continued success.

With best wishes,  
N.R. Mandela"

## Community Club Recites Gettysburg Address

by Paul Dornan

PBS commemorated the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address on November 19, 2013, by engaging students and tutors from Community Club to recite the speech. Nine students and seven tutors read the speech. The resulting video on the PBS Religion and Ethics Newsweekly interspersed phrases from the speech with pictures of the battle's aftermath. The video, now accessible on the PBS website,

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2013/11/27/gettysburg-address-150th-anniversary/21174>

is a wonderfully moving tribute to America's most famous speech and an acknowledgment of Community Club.

## History Happens . . . at NYAPC

### John and Roberta Lentz

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 Jack and Robbie Lentz on August 25, 2013, for this project and for the article below.)*

Ask John and Roberta Lentz about their time at The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, and the memories flow. "We came to NYAPC in the 1960s when George Docherty and Jack McClendon were ministers here. What a time it was!" says Robbie. The church's ministries and activism "opened our eyes" to issues of the day in ways that "made us grow."

Among those issues—"all so intertwined"—were equality among the races and between genders, war and peace, and economic justice. "What did a suburban church offer when so much was happening at this downtown church?" asks Robbie.

NYAPC became deeply involved in the civil rights movement when the Revs. Docherty and McClendon journeyed to Selma, Alabama, to march with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1965. Hailing from the Midwest, Robbie never thought of herself as a racist, but found she was suddenly in tears when she held a black man's hand in Lafayette Park and sang "We Shall Overcome" with the group of protesters assembled there.

A homemaker, Robbie was similarly startled by her reaction to women's liberation personally applied. Tapped for NYAPC's Session, Robbie was introduced to the congregation by Rev. McClendon as "Mrs. John Lentz," prompting someone in the back of the church to shout, "She has a name!" "It was an awakening for me; until then, I had always relied on my husband's and children's credentials."

The Lentzes joined the ministers, other members of NYAPC, and people of faith across the capital city and the nation to protest the war in Vietnam. And they helped with the Poor People's Campaign in 1968, when NYAPC served as the campaign's information center and provided support to the people living in the tent city that grew up on the Mall. The Lentzes took food to the people camped there in the rain and the mud and housed one Appalachian man in their home.

#### Eternal Springtime

Jack and Robbie met at the University of Cincinnati where Jack had a teaching fellowship in German with plans to complete his doctorate, and Robbie Ewig was an undergraduate studying philosophy. Jack says their union "must have been



preordained, since 'lenz' in German means 'springtime' and 'ewig' 'eternal.'"

Jack grew up in Collingswood, New Jersey. He attended the University of Pennsylvania with plans to become an accountant, but World War II altered his course. Jack was drafted into the Army and was sent to London where he lived in a house off Hyde Park, studied the art of code breaking in the basement during the Blitz, and became part of the Allied invasion of France on D-Day + 2.

Seven years Jack's junior, Robbie was born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio. She began college at Ohio Wesleyan with the goal of becoming a teacher. She discovered, however, that while she liked working with children, she had no interest in managing a classroom. She transferred to the University of Cincinnati where she met Jack. They were married in 1950 and moved to Evanston, Illinois, where Jack pursued his studies in German at Northwestern University.

In 1952, the couple moved from Evanston to Washington, DC, where Jack worked for the Central Intelligence Agency. The Lentzes have lived in this area ever since. Jack retired from the CIA in 1975. He then taught English as a Second Language to adults at area high schools and colleges. Robbie volunteered for many years in public schools and libraries. The Lentzes now live at Greenspring, a retirement community in Springfield, Virginia, where they lead active lives.

#### Life at NYAPC

Although Jack was a Methodist and Robbie an Episcopalian, the Lentzes started their church life in Washington at Fairfax Presbyterian in Fairfax City, Virginia and then moved to Trinity Presbyterian in North Arlington. They might have remained at Trinity but for their friends, George and Betty Herndon, who recommended NYAPC. George Herndon's ancestor, William H. Herndon, was Abraham Lincoln's law partner in Springfield, Illinois, and George told Jack and Robbie about Lincoln's connection to New York Avenue.

The Lentzes became very active at the church. Both Jack and Robbie taught Sunday school for the junior-high children —

Jack with Margaret Corman and Robbie with Phil Hanna. Robbie also served as a volunteer with Helen Hanna at the Thomson Elementary School, a short walk from the church. Meantime, Jack tutored at NYAPC's Study Hall program for young people living in the District of Columbia, where he got to know Study Hall founders Virginia Cochran and Dave Brown. The program Virginia and Dave started lives on today as Community Club.

The Lentzes recall a story about Jack's Study Hall student, Sam, which demonstrates the degree to which NYAPC was and still remains committed to the young people in its tutoring program. Sam lived with a girl named Linda, and together they had a baby. The church gave Sam a job so that he could support his family, but Rev. Docherty insisted that Sam and Linda marry. At the time, Robert McNamara, U.S. Secretary of Defense, and his wife Margaret worshipped at NYAPC. Mrs. McNamara provided money for Linda's wedding finery, and Robbie took Linda shopping. The young couple was married in Lincoln Chapel by Rev. Philip Newell, another minister at NYAPC at that time.

### Theological Study and Music

Jack and Robbie remember with gratitude the monthly study groups they attended and the NYAPC members with whom they discussed theology—Keith and Margaret Martin (Margaret Myers), Marge and Curtis McCleskey, Joyce and Charles Warren, and Ann and Kirk White. They appreciate the music made at NYAPC—then and now—and particularly recall Music Director Stephen Prussing's production of Gilbert & Sullivan's "H.M.S. Pinafore," in which Jack performed as Sir Joseph Porter, The First Lord of the Admiralty.

The Lentzes were close to Rev. Docherty and his wife Mary (Jerri). They visited the Dochertys in Scotland, where they recall singing "We Shall Overcome" in an emotional remembrance of their time together during the civil rights movement. In a lighter moment, they toured Balmoral Castle, Queen Elizabeth's private estate in Royal Deeside, Aberdeenshire. Because the chaplain of the castle was a friend of George's, the Lentzes enjoyed the opportunity to sit in the Queen's Chair.

Robbie and Jack raised their three sons at NYAPC. All three boys were instructed in Sunday school by Gertrude Niemeyer, who Robbie recalls "taught to the tune of the hickory stick. They needed it," she says with a smile. "We all do."

The Lentz boys all attended Kenyon College, and both Peter and John graduated from that school. Peter was married at and buried from NYAPC when he died of Hodgkin's disease at age 31. He majored in English at Kenyon and loved teaching English as a Second Language in Arlington County Public Schools. He was also an avid flutist.

John, now a Presbyterian minister in Cleveland Heights, was under the care of NYAPC during his studies at Yale Divinity School. He claimed Jack McClendon as his mentor. John received his doctorate at the University of Edinburgh, which gave his parents an opportunity to visit George Docherty and Sue,

whom he married following Mary's death. The Dochertys moved back to Scotland when George retired from NYAPC in 1976. John and his wife Deanne have three children—Jack, Meg, and Sarah.

The Lentzes' youngest son, Andrew, was baptized and confirmed at NYAPC. He graduated from New College in Sarasota, Florida, worked in community organizing, became a Peace Corps volunteer, and received his master's degree from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. Andrew is now in the U.S. Foreign Service, currently posted to Cairo, Egypt. He and his wife Lauren and children Aiden, Justin, and Harper are members of NYAPC.

The most difficult time the Lentzes experienced at NYAPC was the division that occurred in the church in the early 1980s when Rev. Dr. Edmund Jones was minister. Rev. Jones was "a great preacher" from Scotland, "a brilliant man," say the Lentzes. But "he had a group of favorites, and it was heady stuff if you were in it." The church became polarized during this painful and uncomfortable time. When Rev. Jones left the church, the Lentzes transferred to First Presbyterian of Arlington with other NYAPC members.

Jack and Robbie moved to Providence Presbyterian when they settled at Greenspring in 2002. Reports of exceptional preaching by Rev. Roger Gench in the finest tradition of NYAPC drew the Lentzes back to the church in 2005 where they have remained since.

## Realco Guns Update

by Rev. John T. Mathison

Through the encouragement of Anne Laroche, Margaret Myers joined the protesters in front of Realco Guns on Marlboro Pike in District Heights, MD under the umbrella of Heeding God's Call. Rev. Jack Mathison invited Margaret to enter the Realco Guns Office where he introduced her to Mr. Carlos Del Real, owner of the shop. Mr. Del Real's first response was "Why don't you protest against the 'straw purchasers' instead of in front of Realco Guns." Our thought was "Why do you sell to straw purchasers?"

We asked Mr. Del Real if the new Maryland Legislation that was effective October 1, 2013 requiring 4 hours of training by state police before a permit is granted to purchase a gun had affected his business. His reply was that he would not know the results until the end of the year. As we left the shop, Mr. Del Real indicated that he was as pleased to meet Margaret as we were to see him.

Additional protests are held on the 14th of every month at 10:00 AM in front of the NRA Headquarters on Waples Mill Road in Fairfax, VA. Jack Mathison drove a carload on January 14 as he will on February 14 and on succeeding months on the 14<sup>th</sup>, that day having been chosen because of the deaths of 20 children and 6 adults in Newtown, CT on December 14, 2012. NYAPC members and friends are invited to join either or both protests.

## CUBA CORNER . . .

by Marilyn J. Seiber

### News from First Havana

**Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.** The week of January 19-25, 2014 was the global Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. On Sunday, January 19, the Opening Service for the Week of Prayer was held at the renowned Catholic Church in Havana, Church of the Sacred Heart, with Rev. Héctor Méndez preaching. The closing service was held at First Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Havana, our partner church, on Saturday, January 25 with the Auxiliary Bishop of Havana, Monseñor Alfredo Petit, preaching.

**Felicidades!!** On Sunday, December 8, the First Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Havana celebrated its **112<sup>th</sup> anniversary**. The church was organized on June 16, 1890 but was then closed because of war. It re-opened on December 8, 1901.

**Kudos to First Havana!** The World Council of Churches convened its 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly on November 1-8, 2013 in South Korea. During the Plenary Session on Evangelism, Rev. Cecilia Castillo, a Director of the Latin American Council of Churches, distinguished the work of First Havana and Rev. Héctor Méndez doing practical work where the “ecclesiastical community” is located, one of the poorest neighborhoods in the Cuban capital. The work of First Havana’s hot-line service, open public library, School for the Elderly, tai-chi classes and baseball teams for the community all help to give hopeful meaning and motivation to life. Rev. Méndez says that the fact that First Havana was mentioned in such an important world event as the Council of Churches “is a challenge to keep on doing our job.”

**Angolan Youth Worship at First Havana.** As part of the anniversary celebration on December 8, Angolan youth who study in Cuba and attend First Havana “paraded” down the center aisle wearing typical Angolan clothing, singing and dancing. They then joined Cuban youth of the church for a final hymn.



**Christmas Choral Concert.** On December 19, the Girls’ Choir and Choir “LUNA” performed a Christmas concert at First Havana ending with the combined choirs singing “Silent Night.”

### Next NYAPC Visit to Cuba

The next NYAPC group to visit partner church First Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Havana will travel February 17-24, 2014. Eighteen people are participating on the delegation, including the pastor and representatives of Leesburg Presbyterian who will be exploring a possible partnership with a small Presbyterian church on the outskirts of Havana in Guanabacoa.

### Cuban Council of Churches Visitors

Five pastors from the Cuban Council of Churches were scheduled to visit Washington, D.C. to meet with congressional and administration representatives, November 19-21, 2013. However, their U.S. visas were not received on time, so their trip has been rescheduled for February 25-28, 2014. NYAPC is assisting PC(USA) in hosting and planning for the visitors’ program. Both the (Presbyterian) President of the Council and the Moderator of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba will be part of the delegation and have visited NYAPC previously.



## Njoro Kenya Orphan Program Hires Social Worker/Director

by Fritz von Fleckenstein

The Orphans and Vulnerable Children Program run by our sister church, PCEA Njoro in Kenya, has decided to hire a Social Worker to run the program, on the recommendation of Alice Wainaina, the consultant whom we hired together with Old Presbyterian Meeting House last year. After sifting many applicants, with the help of Mrs. Ann Kangari Gitonga, the District Social Development Officer of Njoro Sub-County, they have finally chosen Catherine Wambui Muhia.



Catherine is a graduate of Mount Kenya University, where she received a Diploma in Community Development and Social Work in December 2013. Prior to and during her study for her degree, she has had a variety of work experience. She worked as an intern in the Family Aids Initiative Response funded by USAID, where she visited households to assess the needs of clients and provision of psychological support among other things. She worked as an intern in the municipal council of Bungoma, doing filing and other secretarial tasks. She was a part-

time data collection enumerator at the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute, collecting data from farmers in the field. She worked with the Maono Women Enterprise Development Fund, encouraging women to join micro-finance institutions and training the self-help groups in savings and loans. Finally, she worked for a pharmaceutical firm, dispensing medicines and handling the money.

Everyone connected with the OVC Program is very excited to welcome Catherine to the program, as she is sorely needed. The children have been growing and entering adolescence and, like adolescents everywhere, they have special problems at this age, which the volunteers have been sore pressed to handle. Catherine will be especially supportive in helping students transition from primary to secondary school and secondary school to college or other vocational endeavors.

(For more on the Kenya program, click <http://www.nyapc.org/kenya-partnership> )

### The Shortest Day

by Catherine Schultheis, Director of Planned Giving/Special Gifts

There are 24 hours -- 1,440 minutes -- 86,400 seconds in every day. Or are there? A "short" day, one when we will not reach the 86,400th second, is coming for all of us.

Most of us have been, or will be, fortunate enough to experience the learning years, the earning years and then the retirement years of life. During our lifetime we will have most likely made a positive difference in the lives of others and supported the mission of the Church. I invite you to think about a new chapter in life, one that involves creation of a "living legacy" from your accumulated resources. Through careful planning, a wonderful chapter in the book of your life can be completed, and you can leave an inspiring legacy for those you knew and loved as well as for those who come after you. Many people find great joy and satisfaction during life knowing that the resources they have accumulated as good stewards of God's gifts will continue to bear fruit in helping others and furthering the mission of the Church.

The shortest day may be coming soon--or may be many years into the future. Give yourself the joy that comes from establishing a "living legacy" for your family and your Church. For Planned Giving information, please contact me by phone (301-622-3149) or by email at [ceks12601@yahoo.com](mailto:ceks12601@yahoo.com)

## Letter from Baghdad

*The following is a letter from Elder Yousif al-Saka and the Presbyterian Church in Baghdad describing the recent situation there and people leaving the country, thanking NYAPC for its support for a new generator following a flood in November, reporting on the Children's Center and Senior Center projects, and asking for our continued prayers.*



**Baghdad Presbyterian church building**

The situation here in Baghdad is bad, maybe it is resemble to that of years ago! I think you are aware of the news of the explosions and car bombs that take place randomly, and were implanted anywhere; roads, markets or at common places. The purpose of these massive disasters is somehow killing people and creates a kind of security disturbance in addition to killing of individuals and abduction without any control of security and law. You cannot feel one single day of peace without explosions that slays hundred of casualties. These explosions hit randomly the common places, schools, markets even churches and mosques. It's difficult for me to say that the Iraqi people are getting used of such terrorism which takes part of our daily normal life. We live with it as an accomplished fact, meanwhile people are wishing for the old days of the last regime despite it was one of the most dictatorial and repressive regimes in the world. One of the international statistical administrations has revealed a report recently that categorized Baghdad as the worst place to live in, of course within the international and humanitarian criteria. As the report said, there are lacking of security, general services, collapsing of the understructure, spreading of poverty, withdrawal in standard of living, outbreaking of corruption in administrations, bribery, wide spreading of ignorance, illiteracy and unemployment.

For the so-called reasons, the migration process and leaving the Iraqi people of their homeland -especially Christian families- is still persisting, it is just like a continuous bleeding of an injured person. Every single day we farewell a family or persons from different churches, they are fleeing usually toward US, Europe or Australia seeking security and peace. It is a kind

of precaution to a worst situation that might happen unexpectedly, and to leave to Jordan that is the safest country in the region now. However, we the believers are still believing that God who is really looking after us, for he is the best to rely upon whatsoever.

The church's projects are inactive for the time being due to bad situations in Baghdad and plenty of people who left the work, fled or migrated. The kindergarten is working very well with a great deal of demand. Notably this project was the primary stage toward the project of "children center" that was planned to be built. But because of the unstable conditions, there was a wrong decision to deal with the second part of the building, therefore, I think it is too hard to rehabilitate for the second time as a completion to the children project. On the other hand still there is hope and efforts to resume this project.

As for the (elder house), the constructions are completed but it needs lot of money to furnish and rehab it. I can say there are efforts in progress to finance this project.

Thanks for the contribution your church has donated to our church for the generator.

At the end I will take this chance - during these holy days- to wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year filled with joy and goodness. My sincere greetings to all friends in the church of Washington, for I demand a special prayer for the sake of our church in Baghdad and for the people of our church and to let peace be prevail and to keep danger away from them. Please remember us in your prayers.

YOUSIF

### **Eric Slaughter Begins Residency in Marriage and Family Counseling and Therapy**

Eric Slaughter was accepted into Residency at the Center for Pastoral Counseling of Virginia this past September. He extends deep thanks for all the prayers and support from NYAPC along this journey. In answering this calling, he believes that individuals, couples, and families of all cultures and backgrounds have immense power to heal, even in the most difficult situations. His approach to counseling emphasizes solutions and discovery of new possibilities in relationships and personal growth.

He continues to serve as a volunteer Hospital Chaplain, and is a choir member and former Diaconal Minister in this church. He is a member of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy and the Chi Upsilon Iota Honor Society in Counseling. Eric has office hours primarily in the District of Columbia and Dale City, but there are offices throughout Northern Virginia. Contact (703) 903-9696 ext. 216. or 202/689-5707 (c).

## Letter from Gary and Chess Campbell



New Year's greetings to each of you.

Gary and I wanted you to know that our Sunday attendance schedule will most likely be altered now that we have completed registration for David's participation in twice monthly Potomac Community Re-

sources for disabled adults--the first and third Sundays of the month from noon to 5 pm. We feel this is an important opportunity for our grandson. Before his parents' death David participated in a number of experiences that Elizabeth and John planned individually and together but the situation is different now. As you might imagine Gary and I are gradually realizing our own limitations and the necessity to seek out established activities that meet David's needs.

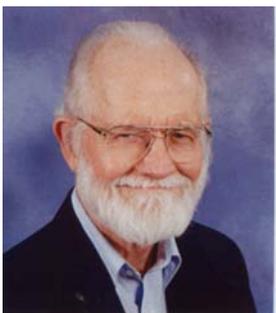
The director of the ARC's After All program that provides after-school care for David loaned us *Thicker Than Water, Essays (39) by Adult Siblings of People with Disabilities*, edited by Don Meyer. These emotionally charged intimate writings, for us at times humorous, at times sad, along with experiences and wisdom shared by our family, churches and friends like you who are helping us to discover how important these years here have been in preparing us for the surprising present and uncharted future.

Again, we want to say thank you for the congregation's faithful prayers and loyal support. We often feel overwhelmed with new tasks as we navigate the unfamiliar support and health programs for our grandsons.

With much gratitude for all your kindnesses,

Gary and Chess

## Letter from Riley McDonald



Dear NYAPC Friends:

I write to express my heartfelt thanks for the kindness and support that this congregation, its support staff, and lay and clergy leadership have shown me during my years of association with NYAPC.

During the 1980's and 1990's when I served this Church as the Development Officer for the Presbyterian Foundation, during my four years, 2005-2009, as the Director of Planned Giving and during my two decades as a Parish Associate, this congregation has been a continuing source of inspiration to me. As I recall these fulfilling years, these experiences have been a high point of my service as a Presbyterian minister.

Ecclesiastes says, "*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.*" (Eccl. 3:1) Now that time has come for me to do some soul searching about my calling as I look to the future. As a part of this process, I want to retire as a NYAPC Parish Associate in order to pursue other activities and other forms of ministry.

When I have shared this desire with some people in the congregation, they have said, "Why?" There are a number of reasons, but one is quite practical. I have made the two-hour weekend and three-hour weekday round-trip commute from Columbia via I-95 and Metro for all these years and the stamina is not what it used to be. Now I also have projects that I want to accomplish and I want to use these saved commuting hours for other purposes. In addition, there is lots of new and younger leadership to guide the way for NYAPC assertively and creatively into the future.

While I still have much to offer in ministry, I retire from my roles at NYAPC with a firm confidence in the future of this Church. I am continually encouraged as I see the sanctuary increasingly filled on Sunday mornings with a diversity of worshipers and particularly a growing number of young adults. I think the NYAPC's educational, service and worship programs are outstanding. As I look to the future, my vision is filled with faith and hope that NYAPC will continue to be a beacon to lead the way for the mainstream Christian community in proclaiming the Gospel by word and deed in a difficult and changing world. I wish you all the best and all of you will be in my prayers as we all pursue our Christian calling into the future!

Riley McDonald,  
January 2014

***Save the Date! The 2014 All-Church Retreat will be on Nov. 15-16. Watch for more details.***

## Transitions

### Births

Alexander Austin Ward (grandson of Judith McGovern),  
August 6  
Harley Ann Fulton, September 1  
Bailey Grace Beachy (granddaughter of Jim and Ann  
Davidson), October 27  
Justin William Weiss, December 5  
Charlotte Jean Dewhurst, December 13

### Baptism

Felix Dominic McKee-Wieseler, Dec. 29

### Marriages

Elisa Jillson and Andrew Blair-Stanek, August 10  
Alison Kootstra and Andrew Nowak, October 5  
Joe Thierry and Melissa Garza, November 3  
Kelly Braga and Paul Krieger, November 9  
Catherine Neale and Glenn Bean, November 9  
Sarah Tulloch and Nica Murphy, November 10  
Casey Stanford and Sean Zintel, November 15

### Deaths

Hallie McFarland, April, 2013  
Evelyn Craig, week of August 16  
Max Fehr (owner of Mozart Café), August 27  
Maida Hutabarat Arifin (sister of Veronica Cartier), Sept. 1  
Cornelia Vogelaar, Sept 20  
Joe Guiffrida, Sept 20  
Sra. Lili Muzio, October 1  
John Mahler, October 9  
Lanny Yoder, October 10  
John Carlucci, October 25  
Robert Donald West, October 26  
John Kootstra, November 12  
Guy Baughman, November 15  
Greg Pryce, December 6  
Mary Ann (Pakosh) Curton, December 17  
Eloise Johnson, December 22  
Ruth Greenlee Davis, December 26  
Rev. Glenn Myers, January 6  
Tracy Algeo, mother of Matthew Algeo, about January 10

