



IN THE LOOP

Volume 1, Issue 3

June 25, 2010

News of Eastminster Presbytery

Presbytery Center Staffing at a Minimum

Next week, June 28-July 2, the Presbytery Center will have minimal staffing. Administrative Assistant Marianne Lidstone will be on a week of much deserved vacation. Financial and Clerical Assistant Arlene McCowin is out due to health problems. Resource Center Coordinator Lorraine Jones will staff the Resource Center as

well as try to cover a number of other bases for us and General Presbyter Dan Schomer will seek to be available as much as possible.

So...if you are planning to come to the Presbytery Center next week, you might want to call ahead. Chances are, someone will be here in the morning Monday through

Thursday and into the early afternoon. Friday is our staff flex day, so always call ahead on Fridays.

Thanks for your cooperation and flexibility!

Dan Schomer
General Presbyter



Rev. Jim Ray will be the guest of honor at a brunch following Sunday morning worship (10 a.m.) at First Presbyterian Church, Youngstown. Jim has reached the 50th anniversary of his ordination. Jim, along with other members of Eastminster Presbytery who are celebrating the 50th, 55th, or 60th anniversaries of ordination as ministers of Word and Sacrament, will be honored at the September 14 presbytery meeting at First Presbyterian Church in Warren.

Most of our churches have placed the Presbytery Office on your newsletter mailing lists, but not all. I read them monthly cover to cover. (Okay, sometimes I scan them). I would love to have a copy of your newsletter!

News Briefs from Eastminster Presbytery

The 219th General Assembly is drawing near. Please keep Revs. Elmarie Parker and Mark Ruppert, Elder Jean Garrett, and YAAD Sarah Bender in your prayers as they prepare to depart for Minneapolis July 3-10. We are saddened that Elder Jeanne Monroe has had to cancel her service as a commissioner due to her husband (Cecil) being diagnosed with cancer. Please keep our G.A. commissioners and the Monroe family in your prayers.

Speaking of the General Assembly, G.A. commissioners will be choosing from 6 candidates for moderator. Rev. Jin S. Kim (a pastor in Minneapolis), Elder Cynthia Bolbach (a lawyer from Arlington, VA), Rev. Margaret Lauterer (a pastor from Burnsville, NC), Rev. Eric

Nielsen (a pastor from Eau Claire, Wis.), Rev. James Belle (a pastor from Philadelphia), and Rev. Julie Leeth (a pastor from Lompoc, CA). Any wagers on how many ballots it will take for one of them to receive the majority? We'll know the answer on the evening of July 3.

Several within the Eastminster family are in need of our prayers. In addition to the Monroe family (First Church, Youngstown), please keep in prayer Financial and Clerical Assistant Arlene McCowin dealing with chronic neck pain, Rev. Jeanine Haven on the death of her mother, and Rev. Pam Flower whose health condition has necessitated here resigning as Parish Associate of the Goodyear Heights Presbyterian Church.

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Fun Facts

So far, Presbyterians have given \$9.75 million to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance for relief work in Haiti following the January earthquake. The money has been used for food and water distribution; thousands of tents, tarps, and other forms of shelter; and sending more than 35,000 hygiene and baby care kits. Discussions are underway about short-term mission groups coming to Haiti beginning next fall.

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On Being Attentive at G.A. (or Shall We Gulp and Jabber?)

By Steve Yamaguchi, Presbytery Pastor
Presbytery of Los Ranchos

Enjoy some tea with a Japanese friend in a nice Japanese restaurant. The tea will be green because it is brewed from unfermented tea leaves. The same plant gives us black tea, but black tea leaves are fermented. In Japanese, black tea is called "kocha" and takes sugar and cream nicely. Green tea is called "ocha" and should never take condiments. The same plant (*Camellia sinensis*) yields two different drinks for two different worlds.

But let's get back to the Japanese table and ocha. You find only one pot for ocha for the table. Your cup has no handle. You might even be seated at floor level on tatami mats. And when your cup is empty, etiquette does not allow you to lift the pot to refill your own cup. You may and should fill the

empty cup of others, but you must wait for an other to fill yours. To refill your own cup would appear self-serving and oafish. These manners work wonderfully - everyone gets cared for and every thirst gets sated - as long as everyone tunes in to the etiquette and pays attention to each other's needs and cups.

The General Assembly could be an opportunity to drink ocha together. But when we gather as the GA, sometimes it appears that we care more about keeping our own cup filled, about slaking our own desire, and so we ignore the needs and wishes of others at the table.

Prayer is like an opportunity to sit down for ocha with God. But between our gulps we're tempted to grab the pot to refill our own cup. We fill pre-

Quote of the Week

G.A. Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons lists his hopes for the 219th General Assembly:

1. *The spirit in which decisions are made will be a prayerful and careful witness of decision-making for the entire church.*
2. *Participants will gain a deeper awareness of the length and breadth of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), realizing they are part of something much larger than themselves.*
3. *Participants will discern with the whole church issues facing congregations.*
4. *A clear common calling will emerge to actively and hopefully engage with the reality of a church in change.*
5. *Attention will move beyond ourselves to a world in great need, both spiritually and physically.*
6. *Participants will talk about their faith with a contagious enthusiasm.*
7. *Participants will have a deep sense that what they did will further the mission of Christ in the world.*

scious moments of quiet with our jabbering to God about how thirsty we are, about what we are worried about, and about what we think God should do - as if God didn't already know. What if God prefers to linger over ocha with us, to have us wait quietly and trustingly for our cup to be filled in God's own perfectly thoughtful time? Could we sip gratefully rather than gulp desperately? Can we be attentive to God's desires more than our own? Might we offer our childlike service of pouring ocha for our adoring parent who does not so much require our tea but rather cherishes our devotion, time, presence, and attention? Could we savor our tea and our time mindfully? Or shall we gulp and jabber? I believe this question is germane to our prayer, our drinking together, and our behavior at General Assembly.

ミネアポリスで緑茶を飲みましょうか。
(Mineapolisu de ocha o nomimashoka?)