Communications Workshops Scheduled
October 16 at **First, Medford**
or
October 17 at **Tualatin**

What do you want your community to know about your church? Are you looking for ways to share God’s love through social media? Does your church have a well-thought-out communications plan — for both internal and external audiences? Create excitement and energy in your congregation by using simple but powerful communications tools. You don’t have to have a huge budget or a large staff to effectively tell the story of your work inside and outside the church walls.

This daylong workshop, conducted by communications professionals on the Presbyterian Mission Agency staff, will give you tips and techniques to better reach your audience. We’ll offer insights and tips on creating a communications plan for your congregation and discuss the do’s and don’ts of media relations and of “pitching” stories to your local media. You’ll learn proven techniques for using social media tools like Facebook and Twitter and leave with tips that will make your communications more effective and help increase your reach.

[More about Communications …](#)

Sign up by contacting the Presbytery Office by August 31 (503-227-5486) or through [email](mailto:).
Q: The Presbytery sent several overtures to the General Assembly. Did they all pass?

A: The Presbytery sent four overtures to the General Assembly. All of them were heard and discussed by a committee but each had a different end result. I have included links to each of the overtures below. The linked pages provide a summary of action in reverse chronological order with the Assembly’s final action showing first (you have to scroll down a bit past the formalities) and below the Assembly action is the committee action and again, below committee action is the overture as we submitted or concurred with and the rationale provided by the presbytery and other groups. After we sent our four overtures to General Assembly, all of the several hundred overtures were divvied up among 12 committees for further study and recommendation to the full General Assembly.

Our overture Responding to the Current Syrian Crisis (when linked click search and type in “Syrian Crisis”) passed after a few minor amendments by the committee.

Concerning Prayer and Preparation for Peace on the Korean Peninsula (when linked click search and type in “Korean Peninsula”) was answered by action on another resolution. You can read some of the backstory in my article “Prayer, Pancakes and General Assembly” elsewhere in this publication.

An overture to recognize the Administrative Professionals Association (no link) and its certification process in the Book of Order was not approved. The committee considered the business late at night and chose to disapprove rather than amend the resolution to address concerns that were raised in discussion.

An overture directing PCUSA entities to divest from fossil fuel (when linked click search and type “fossil fuel”) companies and actively invest in renewable energy followed an interesting path. It was approved with a few changes in committee by a vote of 35-20 but then, after much debate, the full General Assembly voted by 65% to answer the overture by action on another resolution which calls for shareholder engagement rather than divestment.
“The future won’t be built on church questions, but on God questions.”

That was the quote from Erin Cox-Holmes, who spoke briefly to a room of one hundred mid-council presbyters at a dinner at this year’s General Assembly in St. Louis (yes, I am still talking about it!). It was really an ironic moment in many ways. Those of us who serve at the presbytery level of our denomination were meeting to do a lot of “churchy” things – changing bylaws, discussing ecclesiastical structure, debating per capita dollars, and making sure that all of it was done decently and in order.

Yet in the midst of all of this institutional churchy stuff we were also very aware that an uncertain future lay before us. One could feel it in the air – a sort of “take care of the business at hand without getting too attached to any particular decision.” Erin Cox-Holmes made overt what many of us were feeling but hadn’t quite named. “The future won’t be built on church questions, but on God questions.”

I think this is right on. For one thing, if you talk to the average person on the street you are more likely to have success engaging in a conversation about God (or the Sacred) than you are about church. A recent Pew Research poll states that 76% of Oregonians profess a belief in God while only 32% of Oregonians regularly attend church. In this uncertain time God still seems to have held His/Her own pretty well!

But just as importantly, I am noticing a pattern among the churches of our presbytery. In the seventy some conversations I have had with our Cascades’ churches I have noticed a definite trend. Increasingly, our churches are stepping into new territory in the belief that they are following God’s Spirit even as it stretches our ecclesiastical polity. If given the choice between “doing it by the book” and following the nudging of God’s spirit, in almost every case I have noticed the choice to do the latter. Polity supports Spirit, not the other way around, is what I keep seeing experientially reinforced.

But I do want to caution the reader not to assume that this is the presbytery’s way of saying, “Anything goes!” Far from it. When polity is functioning at its best it expands the scope of God’s presence by pointing all our spiritual energy in the same direction and providing for a unified and powerful spiritual witness. Good polity deepens the reach and impact of God’s Spirit in our communities.

This is not an appeal to either call for more loyalty to our polity or to abandon it. Rather it is just a reminder that the future won’t be built on good polity; it will be built on good theology. And good theology should lead to good polity. Church questions matter, but God questions come first. If we get the God questions right, we have a darn good chance of also getting the church questions right.

In trust...
Brian

St. Louise, the location of the 2018 General Assembly

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Prayer, Pancakes and General Assembly

By Paul Belz-Templeman

“You weren’t invited to the breakfast?” The words leapt from the email like an egg onto a hot griddle. I had no idea there was a breakfast or why I would be invited to it. Countless breakfasts occur each morning to which I am not invited. I reread the email from the president of the National Caucus of Korean Presbyterian Churches (NCKPC) attempting to understand why he was surprised that I hadn’t been invited.

Our presbytery had overtured the 2018 General Assembly on four different issues: Fossil Fuels, the Administrative Professionals Association, the Syrian Crisis and Preparing for Reunification of the Korean Peninsula with Prayer and other Actions. The last overture, which requested that a week of prayer for North Korean victims of human rights violation be designated, properties purchased for Korean churches in North Korea be identified and presbyteries be encouraged to work with the NCKPC had raised alarm bells which I had not seen coming. Aside from the passive voice, what was there to find objectionable in the resolution? It turned out quite a bit!

The General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) was hosting this breakfast at our General Assembly in St. Louis. Seeing our overture, he invited Brian Heron and several others from presbyteries overturing General Assembly with Korean peninsula concerns to join him. My correspondent from the NCKPC had also been invited and was surprised that I was left off the list. He was hoping for as many allies at the meeting as possible because the NCKPC was in support of our resolution but the General Secretary and others were opposed to it.

I left the breakfast duties and any pancakes to Brian Heron and spent the rest of the General Assembly learning more about the political and theological complexities surrounding our overture. It’s a long story with a lengthy list of characters, stealthy strategy sessions in several hallways and lively debate in committee. The General Secretary of the PROK believed that highlighting human rights violations would not solve them but only close a door that had been recently opened by the North Korean regime. His argument was essentially: open the North to the rest of the world and human rights violations will diminish. On the other side, many from the National Caucus of Korean Presbyterian Churches noted that victims of North Korean Human rights violations are ignored and forgotten and suffering imprisonment, torture and death right now.

In the end, after much prayer, listening, and debate language from our overture was merged into another resolution. The General Assembly approved the resolution which (among other things) makes September 2018 Korean Mission Month. Congregations are encouraged to 1. pray for peace in the Korean peninsula and for victims of division and conflict on both sides of the Korean peninsula, and 2. reflect on the past 130 years of Presbyterian mission to Korea including both the positive legacies and the ways in which it might have contributed to the Korean conflict.

While neither side was completely satisfied with the result, I was impressed with the work done by the General Assembly Commissioners in handling business that involved complex issues. I came away from St. Louis a witness to the work of the Holy Spirit on this overture and with many others. I look forward to finding ways that as a presbytery we can continue to learn about the issues on the Korean peninsula and ways we can pray and act to bring about God’s peace there. I hope you will join me in praying for our brothers and sisters on the Korean peninsula, especially in September.
Servant Leadership

Roberta Schlechter, Northwest Region Reporter

Needy people often lack access to networks of care and services. Over the last decade St. Andrew’s, Portland has built an extensive network of worshipping communities, non-profits, restaurants and health professionals. Known as “SW Hope,” this ministry receives earmarked funds from St. Andrew’s, and is staffed by Neighborhood Ministry Coordinator Cynthia Reynolds. For a decade church and community volunteers have worked with “Compassion Connect SW (http://compassionconnect.com)” to provide free medical services for uninsured individuals. Locals do the planning and offer hospitality, childcare, meals, services, and resources for those waiting to see a doctor, chiropractor or dentist.

In May 2018, over 200 volunteers served 237 guests at the clinic day held at nearby Wilson High School. Some 104 guests saw a dentist while 133 visited a doctor. Reynolds oversaw the onsite work of ten St. Andrew’s volunteers. Eight St. Andrew’s members sponsored a guest with a $32 donation. Dr. Scott Nasson, a St. Andrew’s member and sports medicine/orthopedics physician, served on the medical team.

St. Andrew’s assignment was the “Welcome Room.” Reynolds explains the process: “By 5 a.m., guests began to arrive. They registered, were welcomed and offered child-care. The food team provided breakfast. At 7 a.m., the medical/dental staff began to triage the guests according to need. After that guests could come to the Welcome Room while they waited their turn for service.”

Traditionally this area has been a resource and referral site. But Reynolds says most needy people already know what’s available. So she took a different approach this year. “We’re supposed to be a clothing closet,” she explains. “Since it was summer, I wanted good summer clothing.” Reynolds found a company online called “Good 360 (https://good360.org)” It’s a clearing-house for corporately donated items. Her program budget covered 150 new summer shirts for women and the same for men. She also secured 300 pieces of costume jewelry for a modest sum.

Thanks to donations from congregants, guests were offered books, magazines and craft kits. “One pastor came from Idaho to have his teeth fixed,” Reynolds explains. “He took home some of my big thick theology books.” Reynolds holds a Master’s degree in Theology and a Certificate of Spiritual Formation from George Fox University. “It’s all about servant leadership,” she explains. She also serves as Office Administrator at St. Andrew’s.

CCNW food volunteers had muffins and coffee in the Welcome Room. There were tables of books, clothing and jewelry. Reynolds says, “I told volunteers to make it look like Costco.” Reynolds was delighted to have 3-4 professionals arrive to offer haircuts. “These people go

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from clinic to clinic,” she explains. “It’s their ministry.” Wilson High students served as interpreters. One student from Somalia also speaks Ethiopian and helped translate at the hair cutting station.

After seeing a doctor or dentist, some guests needed transportation to a pharmacy. Volunteers took care of this need. The food team offered guests and volunteers three meals, including a pancake breakfast, smoothies, salads, sandwiches, milk, and juice.

Reynolds reminded her team, “These are our GUESTS. They are God’s people and now they are our people.” Volunteers helped around 100 guests pick out clothes, jewelry, and books, then sat down to share coffee and conversation. Reynolds’ approach is simple: “If you’re going to fish for people, you need to use bait and lures!”

As with all programs of SW Hope, this clinic day was for the immediate neighborhood. Reynolds says 70 new families are served every month at the neighborhood food pantry. Beyond the day’s event, Reynolds hooked up Compassion Connect NW with the SW Community Health Center, one of St Andrew’s neighborhood ministries.

Annual Lectionary Seminar
October 22-23, 2018
At Menucha

Join fellow teachers and preachers for six sessions with New Testament scholar Luis Menéndez-Antuña, Assistant Professor of New Testament at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary. Come for stimulating conversation with a dynamic teacher and scholar. Come, feed your head and your heart!.

Prof. Menéndez-Antuña comes to PLTS from Vanderbilt University where he recently completed his doctoral dissertation. He has also been a Fulbright scholar and received a Dissertation Fellowship from the Hispanic Theological Initiative and the Luce Foundation.

Menéndez-Antuña also brings twelve years of activism and ministry experience. He has worked in community organizing, HIV advocacy, homeless shelters, prison and with kids on the street. Some of these areas of his ministry sprung from his involvement in Christian Base Communities inspired by Liberation Theology.

The seminar/retreat is held at Menucha Retreat & Conference Center in the beautiful Columbia River Gorge in Corbett, Oregon. More information, directions and online registration are available on the Menucha website: www.menucha.org/programs/lectionary-retreat.

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Christian education, for Presbyterians in
the Central Region, is a high priority for imparting to our progeny, the “Good News” of the
Gospels. The effort has taken many forms from
having children sitting in a circle on small
chairs while the pastor or some elder narrates
the scriptures to more sophisticated programs.

During the summer, this effort is increased by setting aside one week of concentrated
study in a program called the Vacation Bible School (VBS). Volunteers are recruited and
special areas are set aside for paraphernalia to support the program. A homegrown VBS
has been replaced by off-the-shelf programs for sale by various religious organizations. These courses provide curriculums, all kinds of graphics, catchy songs and interesting activities.

For example, United Albany will be exploring “Abundance Orchard,” a place where all of God’s people are fed. Each day, students will join Jesus as he shares a meal with someone new, featuring special worship opportunities, time for children to respond to the story of God through crafts and hands-on activities, games, and lots of fun surprises.

First, McMinnville students spent the week learning God’s Love in the Parable of the Sower. This activity is about Jesus’ parable of the seeds planted on different types of soil. The lesson helped students from kindergarten through fifth grade understand that the seeds which were planted had different results. Following the lesson there were additional resources to help the individual needs of the class. There also is a summer camp program called Tilikum, which the children have been attending for a number of years with kids from other churches.

Community, Redmond opted to use the program “Shipwrecked.” The participants are taken onto an uncharted island where they are rescued by Jesus. They are told that Jesus carries them through every storm in their life. They learn to hold on to God’s promises when they are lonely, worrisome, struggling to not do wrong, and feel powerless.

Presbyterian Church of the Siuslaw, Florence has a group which meets with kids from other churches during the school year. Also, the youth are encouraged to attend the regular worship service through the choir anthem.

First, Bend, on the first Sunday of the month, children are invited to worship with their families for the entire service. There is a designated space for kids in the front of the sanctuary to use this time to engage them in worship to create an intergenerational experience for all.

It seems to me that some comments could be made that addresses the question of how our churches are connecting with the Millennial Generation. With that in mind I had a discussion with Emily Nelson, Youth Director, Community, Redmond. Emily is a true “millennial” having been born in the nineties when she began her faith journey in a small town in Nebraska. Church services were every Sunday as well as on Wednesday evening. Her parents conducted a Bible study in their home during the week with other adults who brought their kids who would then play volleyball. There is not a time that she had not heard that God loved her.

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Continuing the conversation with Emily; “My big sort of paradigm shifting experience happened when I was in high school. At that point faith really just came into focus when I actually saw people my own age who were taking seriously their relationship experiencing God in their daily activities. Seeing people around my age who actually did take seriously the choices that they made which had an impact with their relationship to God.”

One of her friends, when she was like 14, read a scripture about how you’re supposed to pray, not standing on street corners where everyone can hear, but at home. She cleaned out the contents of her closet donating clothes and made prayers an everyday occurrence. She listed on one wall what she requested of God, what she prayed for, and on another wall recorded the results of her prayers. This changed her perception of God, not just knowledge about God and what she was supposed to believe, but activities which deeply impacted performance.

This relationship of her friends for her was to actually experience God's presence. “…which is something I had not ever really felt before,” notes Emily, “so I could not go back into my normal life. With my passion for ministry and in believing that God has called me to minister to people, I have a gift that I want to share.”

Emily adds, “The same people who had been in leadership for the last 30 years are still in leadership roles and are not stepping aside enough to allow my generation to have a role. There was no room for people like me and we left the church in droves. We became involved in some nonprofit organizations or in a social justice humanitarian effort.”

The youth coming after the millennium’s are identified as Generation Z (Gen Z) and have many of the same but also different attitudes. They may lean more toward security and money as a group — they care about making a difference. Gen Z is an interesting mix of tech savvy, smart and dependent. Their phones make them feel secure. Technology is essentially an indistinguishable part of their identity and intertwined in their daily life. It gives them comfort, purpose, focus, and keeps them connected.

In our church councils are we ready to meet the challenge that Millennials and Gen Z presents? Are we open to inviting them to be a part of the leadership of the church, to allow them to interpret our core values to the larger communities?

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**Menucha’s first annual Summer Fair and Ice Cream Social**

**Saturday, August 11 from 10 am – 4 pm**

This new event is an affordable fundraiser (kids get in free!) with something for everyone, all in support of this very special place!

- Artist vendors
- Lawn games for folks of all ages
- Fabulous food
- Face painting
- Music
- Magic
- And more!

Come hungry! Your ticket entitles you to one custom-made ice cream sundae. Plus, we'll be selling picnic-style food made in Menucha's famous kitchen. Bring a blanket, spread out and enjoy a beautiful day here.

Tickets: FREE for kids ages 0-12 and $10 for teens and adults. Bring the whole family! This is a relaxed fundraiser, so please bring your friends, too! (They’ll thank you for introducing them to Menucha!) Tickets available at the gate. Save time: buy tickets in advance at menucha.org/tickets.

Menucha Retreat & Conference Center is located at 38711 E. Historic Columbia River Hwy, Corbett, OR 97019. Contact us at 503-695-2243 or at this [website](#).
Organist Retires after 
56 Years of Service

By Mike Hubbard, South Region Reporter

This month’s South Region piece comes to us from Pastor Murray Richmond of First, Medford. It is a tribute not only to Ginni Peterson, church organist extraordinaire, but also to a special pastor/organist relationship. Truly a “Positively Presbyterian” story.

From the Pastor’s Study  By Murray Richmond

This is one of the hardest newsletter articles I have ever written.

After 56 years as organist extraordinaire at First, Medford, Ginni Peterson is retiring. As she told me in our conversation, “I have had a wonderful ride here, and I want to go out while I am still at the top of my game.”

She will work through the year, with time off for a vacation in September and October, so she won’t be leaving us right away.

I know that some of you have had a much longer history with Ginni than I have, but I can say this—she is by far the best organist I have ever had the pleasure of working with, for two reasons.

The first is what everyone knows—she is a fantastic musician. We hear that every Sunday morning she plays. In the early service, she brings the music to life on the piano. In the second service, from the prelude, to accompanying the introit and the anthem, the hymns, to the postlude, everything she plays has a high quality of musicianship and is perfectly suited for worship. When she plays a hymn or a song, it’s easy to sing along with it.

The other reason may not be as obvious to some people (or maybe it is), but Ginni is incredibly easy to work with. She has zero diva mentality, and clearly sees her role here as supporting the worship life of the congregation. For her it is all about the music and the overall worship experience; it is not about her. The rare times I have offered suggestions (always about what we might do, never about how she plays), she is both respectful of what I suggest as well as respectful of how it will go over with the congregation.

At this point we have not started any serious conversations about where we go from here. I can tell you that we have one of the finest organs on the West Coast, and one of the finest organists. I do not think we can ever replace Ginni, but I can promise you that we will work hard to find an organist who is equal to the instrument, and to the worshipping community here.

The only good news I have is that Ginni and Dudley will be staying in the church, so while we will miss her music, we will not miss them.

The first time I met Ginni, she told me she was a preacher too. “I preach with my fingers,” she said. I have heard other musicians say that, but it has never been as true as it is with Ginni.

We will all miss her preaching.
A Book about Anger
By Ian Haes

When Simon gets mad, he gets REALLY mad. So mad that big, bad, angry beasts appear. At first Simon loves having the beasts around to help scare off anyone who upsets him, but over time he realizes that no one wants to be around him or the beasts. This makes Simon sad, so he decides to try to still his mind and practice being calm. And the beasts disappear!

Featuring colorful and expressive illustrations, this insightful book helps children ages 4–8 learn how to handle their anger. A guide for parents and teachers in the back of the book features strategies for talking to children about their emotions along with various exercises they can use to cope with anger. Click here for more information.

Heaven on Earth (Paper)
God's Call to Community in the Book of Revelation
By Michael Battle

Much of the literature on the book of Revelation paints a frightening apocalyptic vision of the end times. Michael Battle offers an alternative look at Revelation in this new work, seeing it instead as a hopeful call to bring heaven on earth.

Battle explores the problematic imagery found in Revelation before showing how similar problems play out in our contemporary world. Battle sees Revelation as a guide that shows us that we can live out God's call for heaven on earth by living in community with one another, as exhibited through the writings of Martin Luther King Jr., Desmond Tutu, Rowan Williams, and Ubuntu theology. He writes, "I seek to imagine in my particular Christian context how a view of heaven need not lead to culture wars and further excuses for oppressing others. Heaven, as envisioned by John of Patmos, has much greater purpose." For more information click here.

Printable Back to School Prayer Bookmarks.

Exploring various websites, I found this idea of “Back to School Prayer Bookmarks” on the “Grow Christians” website. The site is a partnership between two Episcopal entities that joined together to urge faith growing at home. Very interesting ideas – this being one.

Each year our church holds a Blessing of the Backpacks for our students and teachers. Since our church is smack dab in the middle of a three-college town, we have almost as many educators as we do students in attendance. To honor the wonderful new beginnings of the school year we try and create a meaningful gift to give to each student and teacher beginning a new year of learning and growing.

A few years ago my friend and artist Jeanetta Darley worked with me to design these easy-to-print bookmarks for us to give away.

Whether you are packing these with your child’s lunch, passing them out at church, or handing them to your teacher friends for the first day of school, these bookmarks are a creative way to encourage students and teachers to begin the new school year, and each school day, with grateful open hearts, and eager minds, serving as a reminder that they are never alone. Click here to access the bookmarks and explore the website.

Do you have a book, a Bible Study, a resource that has helped you in your ministry? Please share. Send to editor, Kathleen Waugh at omnibus@cascadespresbytery.org