



April 2015

The Banner

Newsletter of the Presbytery of Arkansas

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"JJ's Fight Club"

JJ was not able to come to our Mo-Ranch Board meeting a year ago. Dizziness, is what we heard; maybe an ear problem. It wasn't. Cancer had already begun its ominous path through JJ's body. Not yet 48, husband and father of two young boys, leader extraordinaire, this wasn't supposed to happen.



But it had and the ever resilient JJ was determined to fight. That, he did. Soon after the diagnosis, "JJ's Fight Club," was inaugurated and with it came T-shirts and coffee mugs emblazoned with JJ's picture, a flashback to Rocky Balboa. All 50 states and 17 foreign countries were represented in "JJ's Fight Club." Hundreds joined.

Throughout the past year, JJ's friends kept up with the fight. They cheered and prayed him, his family and his medical team on. He was going to beat cancer if anyone was and last summer, it appeared it was on the ropes; a knock-out sure. JJ's mantra from the beginning was as crisp as his intellect, "Clear Eyes, Good Heart, Can't Lose!"

A couple of weeks ago, JJ and his wife, Joy, celebrated their 15th anniversary. Just past midnight, JJ joined the saints in light. His absence will be an abiding presence.

The following Monday, JJ and Joy's church celebrated the completion of JJ's baptism into death and resurrection to new life. The sanctuary overflowed. Out the doors and into the quadrangle and up the stairs into the community hall this great crowd of witnesses gathered. A piano and violin prelude welcomed us into the Service of Witness to the Resurrection. The pastor invited us to cry, to laugh, to relish remembering and to recognize that services like this are opportunities to respond to how God is stirring around the edges or in the very thick of our lives.

We honored our dear friend who stood out as a connector of people. JJ thrived in his support of public education. He built bridges between political parties and was an ardent advocate of how not for profit and for profit institutions could work in harmony. Out of the over 450,000 graduates of the University of Texas, JJ was one of only 97 to be recognized as a "Top Hand." Some described JJ as an entrepreneurial philanthropist. Fitting, since JJ was continually finding ways to give himself and his considerable skills away. He was the blessing.

But, the service wasn't about JJ. It was about God, who had welcomed JJ into the

community of faith. About God's unlimited generosity in nurturing JJ in whom God's Spirit richly blossomed filling the world with imagination, love and an amazing wit. JJ used it all stewarding God's gifts to the benefit of others.

JJ's family tradition was to arrive and leave events early. His daddy, Pat, would signal it was time to go by taking his car keys out and jingling them. As Monday's service was drawing to its close, JJ's pastor invited us to take out our keys because it was time to go. JJ wouldn't want us to linger. He knew that the world needs more bridge builders, more givers, more people who love others. So with keys in hand, we became percussionists as the bluegrass fiddle struck up, "I'll Fly Away."

It was time to go out into the world to bless it and love it as God's own beloved community. We were sent in the spirit of one who got it and in the power of the One who also sets before us an unending banquet of opportunity.

Grace always,

Bill

General Presbyterian's Out of Office Commitments

April

- 14 Session meeting, FPC, Little Rock
- 15-18 Mo-Ranch Board of Trustees
- 20-23 Bold Word Preaching Conference, Mo-Ranch
- 26 Installation of Katie Cummings, FPC, Bentonville
- 28 Presbyterian Village Celebration

May

- 2 Ferncliff Board Meeting
- 3 Walnut Grove Presbyterian Church, Farmington--Service of Dissolution
- 5 Committee on Ministry, FPC, Conway
- 9 Committee on Mission meeting
- 14 Arkansas Interfaith Alliance
- 26-28 Leadership Convocation and EP Forum, Irving, Texas
- 31 Preach--First, Yellville

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Church Employment Opportunities in or near our Presbytery

Part Time Music Director -- First Presbyterian Church in Harrison, Arkansas seeks a qualified person to direct the chancel choir, hand bell choir, and praise band, with occasional youth/children's choir, meet with the pastor to plan music for worship, and direct all choir practices. Salary, vacation, study leave, and study fund are part of the salary package.

Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry -- First United Presbyterian Church in Fayetteville, Arkansas is praying for a proactive leader with a love for youth and young adults and a shepherd's heart, a mature faith consistent with the Reformed Christian tradition, personal integrity, and an enthusiastic sense of humor and fun combined with a passion for teaching and forming youth and young adults to be committed followers of Jesus. Focus is 80% youth ministry and 20% college and young adult ministry. This is a full-time position with a generous continuing education allowance and healthcare. Complete position description and contact information available at <http://www.fupcfay.org/leadership/positions-open.aspx>. The position will begin as soon as possible in 2015.

Little Rock YAV Site Coordinator -- The Little Rock Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) site coordinator implements the YAV program at the Little Rock site and promotes both the Little Rock YAV site and the YAV program as a whole. The Little Rock YAV site will focus on the areas of environmental sustainability and emergency preparedness, and it is a partnership between Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, and Second Presbyterian Church in Little Rock. The site coordinator is the point person for coordinating the work of the YAVs and the collaboration between local agencies, staff, governing board, and volunteers.

This is a year-round, half-time position (20 hours per week). Compensation will be \$20,000 annually. For full job description, further information or to apply, please contact Jason Woods, Search Committee Chair at jasommwoods@gmail.com or send resume and cover letter to Ferncliff Camp, 1720 Ferncliff Road, Little Rock, AR 72223 (ferncliff@ferncliff.org).

Other Opportunities

Counseling Center Clinical Director (Monticello, AR) -- Vera Lloyd Presbyterian Family Services is seeking a Clinical Director for a new nonprofit counseling center in Monticello, AR, which will serve youth, adults and families. A detailed description of

the position is available [here](#). You may send a letter of interest and resume to: Vera Lloyd Presbyterian Family Services, 1501 N. University Ave., Suite 345, Little Rock, AR 72207 or email to donnamahurin@veralloyd.org.

Pastor to Host Trip to Germany & Austria -- Kirk in the Pines pastor, Bill Bailey, will host a 12-day tour to the Best of Germany and Austria, Nov. 2-13. Fellow Presbyterians and their friends are invited to join the group visiting these beautiful countries. Destinations include Berlin, Wittenberg (Luther sites), Leipzig, Marbug, Frankfort, Rothenburg, Salzburg, Innsbruck, Oberammergau, Neuschwanstein, Munich and more. Reservations are being accepted on a first received basis. For a brochure with the itinerary and more information, email kirktour@gmail.com.

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Presbytery Office Closed Friday, April 24th

The presbytery office will be closed Friday, April 24th, due to staff conferences. We apologize for any inconvenience.

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People and Church News

News of Our People

--Christian sympathy goes to the family of **Teaching Elder Jimmie D. Thames**, 84, an honorably retired minister member of the Presbytery of Arkansas, who died April 6, 2015 in Fort Worth, TX. A native of Wichita Falls, TX, Jimmie graduated from the College of the Ozarks (Clarksville, AR) and University of Dubuque Theological Seminary. He was ordained in Wichita Falls in 1956 and first pastored Vaughn, Bentonville and First, Gravette in AR, before leading congregations in OK and TX. He was received by the Presbytery of AR in 1989 where he served on Ministry, Witness, Church Development and was a commissioner to Synod and General Assembly. He retired in 1996 after seven years as pastor of First, Jacksonville, was named their pastor emeritus and later served as interim pastor at First, Heber Springs.

He and his wife of 35 years Ailene lived in Pangburn, Rogers and Bentonville before moving to Fort Worth in 2014 where she died on Nov. 12. A joint service for Ailene and Jimmie is scheduled for Saturday, April 18, at 11 a.m. at Stockdale-Moody Funeral Home, 2898 West Walnut in Rogers. The family will visit with friends at the funeral home prior to the service.

Survivors include six children, 11 grandchildren and five great grandchildren. Memorials may be made

to Jimmie D. Thames Memorial, University of the Ozarks, Clarksville.

--**Brenda Shempert** began service March 16 as the church secretary at Wynne Presbyterian.

--At First, Batesville **Kathy Tackett** is the administrative support staff, **Kim Thomlin** is the children's program director and **Lindsey Chambers and Carolyn Ward** are youth directors.

--**Alicia Wheeler** is the Administrative Support Staff at First, Benton.

--**Keley Simpson** is the new full-time mission facilitator at First, Fort Smith as of March 30.

--**Rev. Lewis Donelson**, The Ruth A. Campbell Professor of New Testament at Austin Seminary and a member of AR Presbytery, wrote an essay published in the spring 2015 "Insights," faculty journal of Austin Seminary.

--**Rev. Clare Kelley**, pastor of the NWAR Larger Parish and moderator of General Committee, will be on sabbatical from April 25th through July 25th.

News of Our Congregations and Ministries

--**Trinity Presbyterian, Little Rock's** new men's fellowship and mission group, Men @ Work, had a day of building on the Vera Lloyd Home campus in Monticello on April 11, constructing sports equipment, friendship and student confidence.

--**First, Prairie Grove** had a full Seder Supper on Maundy Thursday followed by a Holy Week songfest.

--**First, Siloam Springs** held an Easter sunrise service.

--**First, Jacksonville** youth used a recipe learned at Senior High Youth Quake to prepare communion bread for the congregation's Easter service.

--**First, Arkadelphia** emails a memory verse for children to their parents mid-week and explains the Bible verse and craft for the next Sunday.

--**West End Presbyterian, Arkadelphia** hosted Holy Week service and lunch on March 31.

--**Central Presbyterian, Russellville** hosted a Family "Skate Night" on March 15 for skaters, watchers and "walkers."

--**Westover Hills Presbyterian, Little Rock** invited **Grace Presbyterian, Little Rock** to their evening Good Friday service.

--**First, Yellville** woodworker made wooden offering plates for use in worship, and families enjoyed the April 4th Easter Fun Day of stories, games, crafts, egg dyeing, egg hunting and refreshments.

--**Central Presbyterian, Fort Smith** hosted the Community Lenten Service on March 24 and the Regional Good Friday Service on April 3.

--**Second Presbyterian, Little Rock** will be hosting noted writer Anne LaMott for a sold-out evening for church members on April 17 and a presentation for the women of the presbytery at 9 a.m. on Saturday, April 18.

--**First, Springdale** pays ½ of the fee for children attending camp sessions at Ferncliff and Dwight Mission in OK.

--**First, Fort Smith** held a conversation series for single adults March 19-April 9 led by author Sarah Thebarge.

--On Sunday and Monday, May 3 & 4, **Westover Hills Presbyterian, Little Rock** welcomes author and blogger Rachel Held Evans as the 2015 Cotham Lecturer. She speaks at the 10:30 AM worship service on Sunday and again on Sunday and Monday evenings at 7 PM in the sanctuary. All events are free and open to the public. Ms. Evans is a New York Times Best-Selling author and popular blogger, has been interviewed on The View, the Today Show, NPR, Slate, the BBC, the Washington Post, the Guardian (UK), the London Times and the Huffington Post. The church will also host a dinner and dance with the Bob Boyd Sounds providing entertainment on May 9th at 5:30. Tickets are \$25 and benefit Family Home at UAMS. For reservations or more details, contact the church office at 501-663-6383.

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Resource Center News

by [NiAnn Thompson](#), Resourcing Director
Phone 501.663.2424, ext. 104
Tuesday-Wednesday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.



PRESBYTERY FACEBOOK PAGE

If you have events that you want the people of the Presbytery to know about, post them to our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/PresbyteryOfArkansas. Rev. Anne Russ at First, North Little Rock (Argenta) at 501.374.7677 or email revruss@gmail.com will be glad to answer your questions.

RAVE REVIEWS:

--Rev. Dave King, interim pastor at Central Presbyterian, Pine Bluff, applauds the book "**The Presbyterian Ruling Elder: An Essential Guide**" by Paul S. Wright, revised by Stephens G. Lytch. He gave a copy of the book (revised for the New Form of Government) to each ruling elder, and they spend the first 5-10 minutes of their agenda time going through the book chapter by chapter. The first chapter deals with rule by elders as opposed to rule in hierarchical churches. "We got into the ordination questions and found it a useful and realistic way to do leader education, especially for new elders," said Rev. King.

--Elder Mary Vollman, First, Jonesboro reports that "This series **When Christians Get It Wrong** (Acc. #DVD9429) was well received. Of course, this particular class did not agree with everything (Rev. Adam) Hamilton said, but they agreed with his greater message of why we are sometimes losing our young people." This set includes the DVD with 7 sessions, each shorter than 20 minutes, participant book for small-group study and book on critiques by young adults of the church-Unchristian behavior, science and politics, speaking of other religions, understanding suffering, homosexuality and getting it right.

--Shirley Evans, First, Yellville complimented a wide array of books and AV resources on life in Jesus' time (finding them "very helpful") that the leaders may use for their annual Vacation Bible School this summer.

YOUR RESOURCE CENTER has purchased copies of the DVDs produced in Jan. and Feb. by Second Presbyterian Church, Little Rock in seven classes on "an even-handed approach" to considering same-sex marriage from scriptural, experiential and legal perspectives. Arkansas presenters included Rev. Steve Hancock, head of staff at Second; Dr. Bobby Williamson, associate professor of Biblical Studies, Hendrix College, Conway (two classes); Dr. Don Weatherman, president and professor of political science, Lyon College, Batesville; Dr. Jay Barth, professor of political science, Hendrix; Annabelle Imber Tuck, former associate justice, AR Supreme Court; and Rev. Dr. Karen Akin, associate pastor at Second. These DVDs may be checked out by any congregation wishing to examine this subject.

NEWLY ARRIVED IN YOUR RESOURCE CENTER AND AVAILABLE FOR LOAN ARE "**Come to the Waters**" is the 2015-2016 PW/HORIZONS Bible Study by former Synod Executive Rev. Judy Record Fletcher. This 9-month study draws on water for its central role in scripture from

creation to the River of Life in Revelation, exploring delivery of God's people through the Red Sea and crossing the Jordan on to baptism.

"**Catch**" (Acc. #DVD9738) is a Churchwide Program for Invitational Evangelism and the kit includes a small group participant book, implementation guide and program guide with DVD ROM. It shows how to attract guests to your church, connect them with your faith community, and help them learn to know, love and serve God.

This year I will be working each Tuesday (7:30-5:30) and most of Wednesday (7-1:30) and can easily be reached other weekdays by email, text or cell phone (501.337.2360).

Self-service hours in the Resource Center are from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday, Thursday and Friday. If these latter days are the best for your visits, I'll gladly gather resources for you to pick up and as usual, I'll mail resources to patrons on the days I'm here.

REMEMBER OUR ONLINE CATALOG! Just go to the www.presbyteryofarkansas.org website, click on "Resources," then on "Resource Center" and "click here to search the catalog" to conduct a simple or advanced search for just the right item.

(The Resource Center receives funding from Presbytery's Committee on Christian Education)

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First, Benton to Host Presbytery Meeting

First Presbyterian, Benton will host the 129th Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Arkansas on Saturday, June 6. Highlights include celebrating the ministry of General Presbyter Bill Galbraith; evangelism presentation and preaching by Dr. Rodger Nishioka, Benton Family Associate Professor of Christian Education at Columbia Seminary; the honorable retirement of two teaching elders; voting on a candidate for Stated Clerk; and discussion and voting on the presbytery's proposed restructuring plan. Plan now to attend!

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Presbytery of Arkansas Youth News

**LAST CALL for Presbytery of Arkansas
2015 Youth Summer Trips!!
Deadline for Registration: April 15th!!**

Mayflower/ Vilonia Disaster Recovery Mini Mission

June 14-17, 2015 | Current 8th-12th graders | \$60

**Jr. High Jubilee at Mo Ranch
in the Texas Hill Country**

July 4-9, 2015

Current 6th-8th graders | \$575

**Montreat Youth Conference
in Montreat, North Carolina**

July 25-Aug. 1, 2015

Current 8th-12th graders | \$750

And Save the Date for Pathways, August 8!

Second Presbyterian, Little Rock. Watch for info!

Youth from all congregations are welcome to attend!

Full information packets and Registration information can be found at

<http://www.presbyteryofarkansas.org/documents/YouthCouncil/Summer%20Trips%202015%20-%20Info%20and%20Registration%20forms.pdf>

Want to stay updated about Youth Ministry happenings in the Presbytery?

"Like" us on Facebook!

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on Facebook,

or go to

www.facebook.com/PresbyteryofArkansasYouthMinistry

This page is for anyone wishing to stay updated about Youth Ministry happenings in the Presbytery -- Youth Workers, parents, youth, Educators, Pastors.

(Presbytery's Youth Ministry receives funding from Presbytery's Committee on Christian Education.)

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Save the Date -- The P.L.A.C.E Returns This Summer

Back by popular demand, the presbytery of Arkansas will again host "The P.L.A.C.E." collection of workshops on Saturday, August 8th, 2015 at Second Presbyterian Church (Little Rock). For a flyer with more information, [click here](#).

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Horizons Bible Study 2015-16 -- A Message From the Author

Greetings friends. I am Judy Record Fletcher and the author of the 2015-16 Horizons Bible Study, ***Come to the Waters***. The study focuses on water stories and images in the Bible. As your Synod Executive Emerita and as one who knows so many of you personally, I am bold to commend this study to you for this next year's study. It is straight-forward Bible study with strong questions and suggestions for teaching the lessons. I tried to keep in mind who Presbyterian Women are and what you desire in your circles and study groups. Thank you for giving serious consideration to study *Come to the Waters*. I consider it my gift to you. Yours in Christ, Judy R. Fletcher.

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New Region Map

The Presbytery Restructure Task Force presented a new map of Regions for the Presbytery of Arkansas. This new map was approved by a vote of the presbytery in October 2014. For a list of the churches in each region, [click here](#). For a map with the new regions, [click here](#).

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Presbytery Welcomes Nomination Suggestions

The Committee on Nominations asks for your suggestions for names of people who would be good candidates to serve on presbytery committees. You may submit these names by completing the Nominations Form at the following link: [2015 Nominations Form](#).

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Prayer List for Congregations -- 2015 can be found [here](#).

(Note: some web browsers may require you to press and hold the "Ctrl" key while you click the link to reach the linked website).

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[Presbytery Calendar](#)

PRESBYTERY STAFF:

General Presbyter [BILL GALBRAITH](#)

Acting Stated Clerk [DAVID DYER](#)

Resourcing Director [NIANN THOMPSON](#)

Director of Mission Support [KENNETH RICH](#)

Staff Resource for Youth [BRITTON VARN](#)

Staff Resource for Congregational Care & Development [MICHAEL VINSON](#)

Treasurer ["BUZZ" ROBERTS](#)

Moderator of Presbytery [ED WILKINSON](#)

Moderator of the General Committee [CLARE KELLEY](#)

Vice Moderator of Presbytery [LACY SELLARS](#)

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The Presbytery of Arkansas is a council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), which is part of the Reformed family of churches within the universal Church of Jesus Christ. Our vision is *to make visible the body of Christ* (Acts II).

We are composed of over 14,000 Presbyterians gathered in 87 active churches, a new church development and one ministry located in various towns and cities in the northern two-thirds of the State of Arkansas.

Phone 501.663.2424 Fax 501.224.2429 <http://www.presbyteryofarkansas.org>