



December 2015

The Banner

Newsletter of the Presbytery of Arkansas

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"First Thoughts"

I would like for my first words in *The Banner* to be words of humble gratitude. I thank you for electing me to be General Presbyter at our October meeting in Russellville. I thank you and the members of the General Presbyter search committee for your vote of confidence as I begin this position. And I want to thank you for the many phone calls, emails and cards that you have sent during the past several weeks.



Last month Bill titled his final article in *The Banner* as "On the Way in and Out." As the one who is now "in", I want to thank Bill Galbraith for his faithful commitment and years of service to the Presbytery of Arkansas. He has served us extremely well and I know you join me in wishing him many joy-filled and blessing-filled years of retirement. Like him, I find it a privilege to follow the other "Bills" that I have known who have served this Presbytery; Bill McLean, Bill Henning, Bill Branch and Bill Galbraith. And I am encouraged that at least Henning, Branch and Galbraith came into this position like I do - without presbytery executive experience after many years of parish ministry. I am thankful to our three most recent "Bills" for their prayers, encouragement and support that they have offered to me.

Without having that experience, it may give you comfort to know as it does me, that I will be participating in a 3 year leadership development training program for presbytery executives. My continuing education for 2016 will take me to two training events as part of the program. I currently have a 90 day companion who is helping me adjust to this new position. When that term is over, I will have a coach assigned to me for a three year period to help answer questions and give feedback on how I am handling various issues that arise. In addition to that, I have support offered by my colleagues who serve in this position in the other presbyteries of the Synod of the Sun. I am extremely grateful for a large network of support.

One of my goals is to worship in each of our congregations over the next 2 or 3 years. I will certainly try to contact the pastor (if available) or someone in the congregation so that my presence is not a surprise. If possible I would welcome the opportunity to do a "minute for mission" on things that are happening in the presbytery.

I will write more next month about the year before us in 2016 as we begin to implement the new presbytery structure. I want to encourage us to grow into this new structure together and embrace both the challenges and the opportunities that the new structure will provide. We will need to refrain from the impulse to want to

operate just as we have in the past, and instead try to imagine how we can operate together in a different way into the future.

But for now, I pray that each of us can focus on preparing to celebrate once again the incarnation of the One who binds us all together. May your celebration of Christmas be filled with joy and blessings, in your congregations and in your homes.

I look forward to getting to know those of you I have not yet met, and know that I am thankful for the opportunity to be partnered with each of you in ministry in this beautiful part of God's creation and in the wonderful family known as the Presbytery of Arkansas.

Stewart Smith

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Church Employment Opportunities in our Presbytery

First Presbyterian Church--Bentonville is seeking a **Full-time Teacher's Assistant** for their *My Friends & Me* Daycare for the 2015-2016 school year. For more information, contact Mrs. Z Cooper at 479-273-5450 or zkcooper@fpcbentonville.org.

First Presbyterian Church--Bentonville is seeking a **Director of Children and Youth Ministries** to lead the young people of their church as they grow in faith and service as followers of Jesus Christ. For more information, visit their website at www.fpcbentonville.org. Qualified candidates may submit a resume and references to David Hill at dvlhill@yahoo.com. For more information, [click here](#).

Second Presbyterian Church--Little Rock is seeking an **Administrative Associate -- Communications**. This position designs and produces various communications including newsletters, bulletins and mailings as well as maintaining the church's website. Knowledge of Microsoft products, HTML, CSS, WordPress and graphic design software is requested. For more information, contact Aileen Moore at 227-0000 or aileenmoore@secondpreslr.org. You can download a more detailed description [here](#).

Other Opportunities

Office Manager (LifeQuest of Arkansas) -- Little Rock

Hours: 24-32 hours per week, Monday through Thursday

Benefits: Annual leave; sick leave; holidays; 50% health plan premium; annual employer contribution to individual IRA

Minimum requirements: 50+ wpm keyboarding with high degree of accuracy; excellent computer skills; ability to manage database software and QuickBooks financial recordkeeping. Experience with audio-visual equipment a plus. General responsibilities: Maintain database and financial records; provide support for operations of education programs, fundraising activities, volunteer leaders, and Executive Director.

Pay: commensurate with skills and experience

To apply: provide a resume with references and contact information to Ann Leek, Executive Director, at: aleek@lifequestofarkansas.org

YOURS FREE FOR THE TAKING! -- Park Hill Presbyterian Church in North Little Rock has available free for the taking on a first-come, first-served basis 215 copies of the red 1955 *The Hymnbook* and 132 copies of the blue 1990 *Presbyterian Hymnal: Hymns, Psalms and Spiritual Songs*. Contact Amy Jones at 501-753-9533 or parkhillpres@sbcglobal.net.

ALSO FREE FOR THE TAKING! -- First Presbyterian Church in Rogers has many pieces of choir music available for free (they only ask that recipients pay for postage). You may call their church office and speak to Joan with any additional questions and/or let her know if your church is interested, as it will be given on a first come, first serve basis. The church office is open from 9 AM to 1 PM - Monday through Friday. For a list of the music, [click here](#).

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People and Church News

News of Our People

--**Rev. Jeff Cranton** of Hot Springs has resigned as the Stated Supply at First, Gurdon to serve as interim pastor of the combined congregations of First/Bethany Presbyterian, Muskogee, OK. Beginning Dec. 1. He was a member of the presbytery's Committee on Disaster Preparedness and Response.

--**Revs. Linda Whitworth-Reed and David Reed**, honorably retired, have resigned as interim pastor, Grace, Little Rock and stated supply, First, Lonoke, respectively. She has accepted a call as pastor of First, Iola, KS. in John Calvin Presbytery. Linda was a member of presbytery's Committee on Congregational Care and Development and David was a member of the Resource Center advisory

board.

--**Commissioned Ruling Elder Ted Mealor** will retire from that position at First, Marianna at the end of the year.

News of Our Congregations

--**First, Hot Springs** served dinner from 11 to 1:30 for the Whittington/Park Avenue neighborhood on Thanksgiving Day.

--**First, Benton** will offer "The Longest Night" service on Dec. 20 for all who suffer and those who support others in healing and wholeness.

--**First, Siloam Springs** hosted a Praise and Thank Service on evening of Nov. 8 with collection for missions.

--**First, Batesville** "Hanging of the Greens" occurred on Sunday night, Nov. 22.

--**First, Mountain Home** has a team of three people who greet and follow-up with guests in worship with home visits.

--**First, Van Buren** had a Christmas Open House at the manse on Dec. 6.

--**Mountainburg Presbyterian** hosted the Cluster 6 Thanksgiving Service on Nov. 22 and the all-church sing on Dec. 6.

--**First, Huntsville** is in the final stages of finishing their new building to be dedicated in April.

--**Kirk in the Pines, Hot Springs Village** hosted World Communion Day service of Church Women United on Nov. 6.

--**First United, Fayetteville** Alternative Market with vendors such as Habitat, SERRV, Vera Lloyd Home, Heifer International, and AR Rice Depot on Nov. 22 and will have a new member reception on Dec. 13.

--**Presbyterian Church of Bella Vista's** deacons distribute prayer shawls and afghans knitted or crocheted by members.

--**Graham Memorial Presbyterian, Forrest City** offered space for St. Francis County Health Dept. to give flu shots in Nov.

--**Central Presbyterian, Russellville** is preparing Christmas food baskets for individuals and families, which last year fed 211 people.

--**Second Presbyterian, Little Rock** is sponsoring ads, paid for by an anonymous church member, on three LR radio stations, inviting people to worship and to view their website.

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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.

--Two copies of the 2015-2016 Presbyterian Planning Calendar are available for sale at the presbytery office for \$15.00 per copy. It's not too late to transfer all those "things to do" to a fresh calendar.
--It's the time of the year when many churches elect those who will serve in the ordered ministries of deacon or ruling elder. Following that election comes the time of training and preparation when each should receive the new "**Book of Order 2015-2017**" (part II of the PCUSA Constitution) which is available from Presbyterian Distribution Services in regular print, large print or downloadable file.

RAVE REVIEWS

--Roger Bates, First, Yellville is quoted as writing "My adult class and I vote this study ("**Soul Keeping: Caring for The Most Important Part of You**" by John Ortberg) one of the best we have ever used." Resource set includes hardback book, six session DVD (each segment ranging from 22 to 25 minutes) with titles what is the soul, struggle of the soul, what the soul needs, practice of grace, gratitude and growth, and a study guide.

--Nancy Passini, Westover Hills Presbyterian, Little Rock reports that church children enjoyed the 29-minute DVD (for children 3 to 10) entitled "**The Prince of Peace: the Christmas Story, Teaching Children Why Jesus Came**" (Acc. #DVD8698) in 3D animation as much as the adult class liked "**Nativity: The Art and Spirit of the Creche**" (Acc. #DVD8696), a 30-minute program that unites theologians and collectors with a beautiful array of nativity scenes from across the globe.

LOOKING AHEAD TO EPIPHANY, JANUARY 6

The story of the visit of the wise ones is often rolled into the early Christmas story (with the stable and animals, shepherds and angels) instead of seen as separate, later and uniquely a gift to us Gentiles. These resources can help with Christmas, part two.

"**The Star of Bethlehem: Unlock the Mystery of the World's Most Famous Star**" (Acc. #DVD9327) is a documentary walk through the biblical and historical clues revealing the significance of this celestial event and the truth of scripture for adult groups. 65 minutes

"**Mystery of the Three Kings: One of the Great Stories of Christmas**" (Acc. #DVD9458) searches for the origin of the eastern visitors, their gifts, the appearance of the star. Also includes extras on Babylon and Helena. 105 minutes and suitable for dividing into two classes.

For Children: "**The Fourth King" A Christmas Film for Anybody who's ever been late**" (Acc. #DVD9097) is the animated story of the fourth king who missed the rendezvous with the other three and then was delayed by other people in need until he finds more than he ever imagined. 30 minutes.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE PRESBYTERIAN?

One of the adult classes in the church I serve as Director of Christian Education (First, Malvern) starts each class with a few minutes spent on "What does it mean to be Presbyterian." I am so proud of that group of young adults for taking seriously the sign out front. Here are some suggested resources for others asking the question of religious identity.

"**Distinctively Presbyterian**" (Acc. #BK9836) by William E. Chapman continues to examine the Book of Order (Part II of our constitution) for the issue of what holds our denomination together in the midst of diverse views and practices.

"**Presbyterian Faith that Lives Today**" by Donald K. McKim presents six brief chapters on "the basic tenets of Presbyterian theology and doctrine, from their beginnings to their meaning for the church today." Titles include The Bible: Source of It All, God who creates, confessing Jesus today, Holy Spirit in church and world, ministry in today's cultures, what it means to be Reformed.

Advent wishes and Christmas blessings to patrons, friends and supporters of the Resource Center.

This year I will be working each Tuesday and Wednesday (7:45-5:15) 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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Benevolence Update -- Thank You!!

We would like to take a moment to thank every congregation that has supported the mission of the Presbytery of Arkansas by its giving. We continue to be blessed by the generosity of you, our friends and companions in ministry. To view a report of the Benevolence amounts received through November, [click here](#). If a church or individual would like make a gift to be included in 2015's business, the gift can be made payable to the Presbytery of Arkansas. Please make sure it arrives at the presbytery office by December 22nd -- our office is closed from December 24, 2015 - January 4, 2016

Again -- thank you for your support!

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Presbytery to Gather at Lyon College

The 131st Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Arkansas is set for **Friday and Saturday, Feb. 12 and 13, 2016** at Lyon College, Batesville, AR. Highlights of the meeting will include installation of General Presbyter Rev. Stewart Smith, moderator of presbytery Rev. Lacy Sellars and vice moderator Ruling Elder Ruth Hamilton; approval of the 2016 budget; welcome of at least three teaching elders new to the presbytery; worship with communion; report from the Implementation Task Force on moving into restructuring; introduction of two inquirers into ministry; election of a full slate for all committees; and presence of "Youth at Presbytery" advisory delegates.

Four pre-presbytery workshops and activities precede the gavel on Friday evening: Clerk of Session training, introduction to Solar under the Sun, a workshop by Dr. Paul Hooker from Austin Seminary,

and work projects led by students and Lyon Chaplain Ray McCalla.

This date is one week earlier than the usual date for the Feb. meeting, set by General Committee so that the presbytery had the time-sensitive opportunity to concur with overtures to next summer's General Assembly sent by other presbyteries if it so chose.

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Arkansas Pilgrimage to be held April 28 - May 1, 2016

Are you looking for a boost in your faith journey? Consider attending the Arkansas Presbyterian Pilgrimage to be held at Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center from April 28 through May 1, 2016. The pilgrimage weekend will begin at 5:30 pm on Thursday, and will end about 5 pm on Sunday. There will be plenty of worship, prayer, food, study, fellowship, and much more. The cost to attend the weekend is \$200.

Scholarships are available if you need financial aid from our Scholarship and Endowment Fund. Also, if anyone is interested in contributing to the Scholarship and Endowment Fund, information is available at the website below.

Applications are available on the Arkansas Presbyterian Pilgrimage website www.pilgrimage-arkansas.org

You may also pick up participant applications from the Presbytery Office in Little Rock. If you have any questions, you may contact the Registrar at ARPC.registrar@gmail.com

The deadline for applications is April 18, 2016.

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

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Let's Get Organized!

*Rev. Michael Vinson, Staff Resource
Congregational Vitality*

For the last several months we have been learning about what it takes to be successful in ministry. First we must be clear on our mission or as I like to call it our purpose. This answers the question "Why are we here?" After we understand our reason for being, then as

a church we are ready to recruit, develop and train the leaders to accomplish our mission. Then we are ready to cast a vision of how we see ourselves as a church, based on our mission and our leadership. We can ask ourselves "what will we look like in the future" with this mission, led by these leaders. Then we are ready to develop the community to implement the purpose, led by the leaders who understand the purpose, based on a vision for the future of the purpose. Then and only then are we ready to work on the management.

Management is an area where we Presbyterian types excel. We are good managers. We pride ourselves in being able to define and solve problems and so we are eager to jump in and manage whatever is before us. In the daily life of the church there is much to be managed. There are programs to organize, people to train, buildings to maintain, worship, education and many things going on in the life of the church that have to be managed. Sometimes we are so busy managing that it becomes the focus of what we do as a church. One day we look around and notice that we are very busy managing but aren't really sure how the managing is helping us to accomplish our mission.

Management is the fallback mode for us Presbyterians. If all else fails organize something. When churches realize membership is dramatically off, leadership will often get together and try to figure out what is going on. I have heard churches come up with all kinds of solutions to solve a problem. Everything from redecorating the parlor, carpeting the sanctuary, feeding the hungry or organizing a mission trip all in the hopes of "getting more people involved" which usually translates to getting more people in the doors in order to grow membership.

This way of doing things rarely works. We can't manage our way to solving our problems unless we first understand what we are managing and why. Here is where clarity of purpose helps us out. If we understand our purpose, then we can begin to ask ourselves the question "How does all of this help us accomplish our mission?" Will redecorating the parlor help us accomplish our mission? If so, then it might mean more than new carpet and paint.

The key in management is to know what you are managing and why. Management helps us accomplish our purpose, develop the leadership to accomplish the purpose, move us in the direction of our vision and it develops and grows the community to accomplish the purpose. If we are spending time in the management area that does not help in this way then it is a good time to evaluate. Maybe it is time to give some things up or maybe it is time to re-evaluate the purpose.

If you or your congregation are interested in discerning management needs for your congregation or developing a clear sense of purpose let me know. You can contact me at mvinson17@gmail.com. Blessings of Advent and best wishes for the new year.

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Presbytery of Arkansas Youth News

GO

2016 PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH **Triennium**

**Presbytery of Arkansas Delegation
to Presbyterian Youth Triennium!**

July 18-23, 2016

**Purdue University
West Lafayette, IN**

**\$685 per youth (entering 9th grade through
graduated 12th) and Work Crew (at least 1
year out of high school, approx. 19-23 years)**

\$400 per adult (21+)

Registration deadline: January 15

www.presbyterianyouthtriennium.org
www.presbyteryofarkansas.org/frmyouthcouncil.aspx

The Triennium Information and Registration packet is available at
<http://www.presbyteryofarkansas.org/frmyouthcouncil.aspx>

For important dates in 2016, [click here for a brochure!](#)

**Want to stay updated about Youth Ministry happenings in the Presbytery?
"Like" us on Facebook!**

Search

PresbyteryofArkansasYouthMinistry

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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Annual Spring Retreat

Save the date now for the Annual Spring Retreat (**March 3-5, 2016**) at Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center. This retreat is sponsored by your Committee on Congregational Care & Development.

For a brochure with more information, including topics and leaders (as well as registration details), [click here](#).

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Winter Weather Reminder

When Little Rock schools close for winter weather, the presbytery office closes also. The office will be closed from Dec. 24 through Jan. 4 in observance of Christmas and New Year's Day. Our fiscal year ends on Dec. 31, 2015. If you need reimbursements from or donations to the presbytery to be included in 2015's business, please make sure they arrive in the office by Dec. 23rd (our last working day of 2015).

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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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Prayer List for Congregations -- 2016 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 [STEWART SMITH](#)

Stated Clerk [ROBERT LOWRY](#)

Assistant 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>
