



December 2016

The Banner

Newsletter of the Presbytery of Arkansas

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Hopeful Financial News

by Rev. Stewart Smith, General Presbyter

November 23 marked my first anniversary in the role of General Presbyter of Arkansas. That anniversary date came with worry that I will soon not be able to use the "I'm new at this" excuse, even though I continue to learn new things and face new challenges in this role. 2016 has been a challenging year in many ways in the Presbytery of Arkansas. Finances and budgets have been a concern for many of our congregations and they have been a concern for the Presbytery. We began the year with some anxiety and uncertainty over a million dollar loan that provided a gift with a much larger return on investment as it was matched with funds to help Ferncliff's capital campaign. In addition to that we had an operating budget with a projected deficit of almost 134,000 dollars. Needless to say, getting a grasp on the presbyterys' finances has taken a lot of my time in 2016.



I write to report hopeful news on both of those issues. If you missed the October meeting of presbytery, it was announced that we have received an offer on the Chenal property in west Little Rock. There are some contingencies based on some site studies but if all goes through, the sale will be finalized in February. The sale price will be enough to pay off the loan and any closing costs associated with that. The other hopeful news is that the Administration Committee will propose an operating budget that cuts the deficit in half (actually by 55% - from 133,928 to 60,330). It is my hope and one shared by the Administration Committee that we can get to a balanced budget either in 2018 or 2019. Even though we are cutting the budget by over 80,000 we still need your support for 2017. As most of you know, contributions from our congregations have decreased over the last 5 years, but our budget reductions have not kept pace with the reductions in giving. The presbytery received over \$818,000 from congregational support in 2011 and received just under \$615,000 in 2015. Please remember that these cuts to the 2017 budget are to bring down our deficit spending because of the reductions in congregational giving.

In working with members of the Administration Ministry area, we hope to be able to stop the decline in congregational support or at least the rate of decline in the near future. We understand that many of our congregations are facing similar challenges in their budgets. We understand that a few of our congregations are still paying off debt from capital campaigns. We understand that congregations are making difficult decisions about where to spend mission dollars beyond their walls.

This year -- rather than asking for a percentage tithe from your congregation's budget, we are asking for you to prayerfully consider what you can give to the work of the larger connectional church. As a reminder, Presbytery is paying per capita of \$7.50 for each member on your membership rolls. This money goes to fund the office of the General Assembly of the PCUSA. In addition to its important year round work, the office of the General Assembly provides counsel and information to our

presbytery throughout the year. In addition to that we tithe a tenth of congregational giving to the work of the wider church -- supporting the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Synod of the Sun and the two PCUSA colleges within our bounds, Lyon College and University of the Ozarks.

If your congregation has not been contributing, would you consider an amount that would move us closer to 100% participation?

If your congregation has been contributing, would you consider giving at least the same amount in 2017?

For those congregations that can give more, would you consider increasing your giving for those congregations that cannot?

As a presbytery, we will need to make more cuts to the budget for 2018. Those decisions may be more difficult and we will need to continue to have discussions to prayerfully consider what we prioritize as we move into the last part of this decade. If contributions remain the same or increase, we will not have to cut as much in next year's budget.

We are all in this together!! I continue to be thankful for your prayers and your participation as we strive to make Christ visible in the congregations and communities and world we live in and serve. And I continue to be thankful to be a partner in ministry with each of you as we faithfully do this work together in this beautiful part of God's creation. May your celebrations of Christmas in your congregations and families be filled with joy and may your New Year begin with hopeful anticipation as we look forward to another year of life and ministry together in 2017!!

Stewart

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Preliminary Budget Available for Download

The 2017 Preliminary Budget for the Presbytery of Arkansas can be downloaded [here](#). This is the budget that will be presented for approval at the February presbytery meeting.

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Church Employment Opportunities in our Presbytery

Pastor -- Huntsville First Presbyterian Church --First Presbyterian Church (Huntsville) seeks a half-time pastor to help lead their congregation. Full details are available through the CLC portal through www.pcusa.org. Inquiries can be directed via email to Jason Holt at jholtmd@gmail.com. The website for the church is: <http://fphar.church>.

All Souls' Church -- Scott, AR -- Two positions are open at All Souls' Church in Scott, Arkansas. A job description for the **Minister to Youth** can be found [here](#). The job description for **Minister to Preschool and Children** can be found [here](#). The contact person for these jobs is Rev. Ward Rudolph (PCUSA) solo pastor (email: wardly62@gmail.com, phone: 479-466-9975).

Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) Site Coordinator (Little Rock) -- The Little Rock Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) Site Coordinator implements the YAV program of the Presbyterian Church (USA) at the Little Rock site and promotes both the Little Rock YAV site and the YAV program as a whole. The program provides young adults a year for service, spiritual growth, simple living and vocational discernment. The Little Rock YAV site is a partnership between Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, and Second Presbyterian Church (Little Rock) and has a focus on the areas of environmental sustainability and emergency preparedness. The YAV residence is located at Ferncliff Camp. The Site Coordinator is the point person for coordinating the work and personal growth of the YAVs as well as 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 Search Committee at ferncliff@gmail.com.

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People and Church News

News of Our People

--**Molly Murray** is the new office manager at First United, Fayetteville.

--**Kayla White** is the new director of music ministries at First, Conway.

--**Will Ritchie** has completed his service as youth director at Wynne Presbyterian.

--Congratulations to Certified Christian Educator **Susie Wright** and husband Curtis on the birth of their seventh grandchild Abigail Raye Wolf, daughter of Courtney and John Wolf of Pineville, Louisiana. Abigail arrived Monday, Dec. 5. Susie is administrator at Westminster, Hot Springs and with Curtis has led a decade of the presbytery's mission trips.

--Christian sympathy is extended to Janice Mitchell and family on the death of her husband **Rev. Larry Curtis Mitchell**, 68, on Nov. 18 at their home in Forrest City. At the time of his death Larry had served as pastor of Graham Memorial Presbyterian Church in Forrest City for six years.

A native of Frankfort, KY, Larry graduated from Southern Nazarene University, Bethany, OK; Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, GA with a M.Div.; and Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary with a D. Min degree. He was ordained in Flint River Presbytery in 1974 and pastored churches in GA, MO, TX, NC and from 1987-1991 First, Little Rock. In Arkansas Presbytery he served on the Christian Education Committee and the Committee on Clusters after serving on Presbytery Council in Mission Presbytery, evangelism committee in Savannah Presbytery, and as synod commissioner from Cherokee Presbytery.

He is survived by his wife of 27 years Janice B. Mitchell, one stepdaughter Ashley Bermingham (Jason) of Little Rock, one granddaughter Mary Parker Bermingham, his mother and sister. The memorial service was held at Graham Memorial, Forrest City on Tuesday, November 29, with General Presbyter Stewart Smith and Rev. Dr. David Dyer officiating. Memorials are suggested for the church, the American Heart Association or the American Diabetes Association.

--On November 20th, **Rev. Karen Akin** was installed as Pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church in Little Rock (photo below):



From left to right: Rev. David Gill, Elder Betty Winter, Elder Betty Glenn, Presbytery Moderator Rev. Lacy Sellars, Rev. Anne Russ, Rev. Karen Akin, Elder Cyril Hollingsworth, Rev. Lindy Vogado.

--On December 4th, **Rev. Jai Kwak** was installed as Pastor of Central Presbyterian Church, Pine Bluff (photo below):



From left to right: Rev. Dari Rowen; Vice-Moderator of presbytery Elder Ruth Hamilton; CRE Harlis Wright; Rev. Dave King; Elder Kitty Rubenstein; Rev. Jai Kwak; General Presbyter Rev. Stewart Smith; Mrs. Young Kwak; Moderator of Presbytery Rev. Lacy Sellars; Elder Kay Cromwell

News of Our Congregations and Ministries

--**Mountainburg Presbyterian** supplied food for 284 children's backpacks on Fridays in November.

--As were many Presbyterian churches, **First, Bentonville** was a polling site for the November 8th general election.

--**Westminster, Hot Springs** incorporated the Hanging of the Greens in worship on Nov. 27 and had an intergenerational Advent Celebration on Dec. 4.

--**First, Malvern** prepared a meal for first responders on Nov. 12 and conducted an outdoor Blessing of the Animals Service on Nov. 13.

--**First, Springdale** helped stock the pantry for Faith in Action clients, all of whom are over 60 and homebound and many of whom require low sodium or low sugar foods.

--Deacons decorated the sanctuary and fellowship hall of **First, Huntsville** for Advent and Christmas.

--**Central, Russellville** collected food donations for baskets to be given out on Dec. 17.

--**Trinity Presbyterian, Little Rock** hosted the AR Chamber Singers Holiday Concert on Dec. 13.

--**First, Arkadelphia** invites their children to wear Christmas pajamas to church on Christmas morning.

--**Kirk in the Pines, Hot Springs Village** erected a "Giving Tree" with ages and sizes of children to shop for who are students at Vera Lloyd Presbyterian Home or two Head Start schools in the county.

--**First United, Fayetteville** has published a church history "A Light on the Hill: The Journey to Presbyterian Hill, 1830-2016".

--**Presbyterian Village, Little Rock** collected senior-friendly non-perishable food items in December.

--**First, Fort Smith** Christmas Store offered reduced-priced new toys for families with low incomes to buy, wrap and give to their children on Dec. 3.

--**First, Morrilton** committees sponsored Advent Adventure for four Wednesday nights, including a soup supper, adult Bible study and craft projects for children in K through grade 6 (assisted by junior and senior high youth) to help decorate the sanctuary.

--**First, Conway** youth sponsored "Grinch of a Good Time" children's party on Dec. 3, complete with roasted beastly (turkey) sandwiches, games, ornament-making and Grinch cartoon while parents shopped or had a date night.

--**First, Mountain Home** plans ordination and installation of ruling elders and deacons on Jan. 8.

--**First, Hot Springs** hosted a Community Thanksgiving Day dinner on Nov. 24, especially for the residents of nearby Whittington and Park Avenues.

--**First, Batesville** is creating Christmas Eve Kindness baskets of treats, card games, and thank you notes for those who serve the community on Christmas Eve at fire stations, police and sheriff departments, jail, emergency room and EMS headquarters.

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[Resource Center News](#)

by [NiAnn Thompson](#), Resourcing Director
Phone 501.663.2424, ext. 104
Monday & Wednesday, 7:45 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

Chaplain Stacey Hammons, Presbyterian Village, Little Rock says that she used the Kerygma "**Lord, Teach Us To Pray: Six Studies on Spirituality and the Lord's Prayer**" by John Purdy (Acc. #BK6411) resource book and leader's guide for staff Bible study, basis for sermon series and in her spirituality work with residents and found it very helpful.

FROM THE CENTRAL ARKANSAS EDUCATORS GATHERING came these suggestions:

--Check out the Link to the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators for great weekly articles of interest to church leaders (<http://advocateblog.apcenet.org/2016>). Recent titles include "Connecting Worship and Learning: Faith Development on Two Fronts", "Why Celebrate the Christian Year?", "Stumbling Into Streaming," "Giving Bibles to Children...Which One, When and How We Give...It All Matters!" by Lib Caldwell and "Parenting in a Digital World."

--Other recommendations from church professionals were these books:

New York Times bestseller "**Learning to Walk in the Dark**" by Barbara Brown Taylor (we have 5 copies for loan)

"Fear of the Other"

children's book "**The Golden Rule**" by Ilene Cooper which outlines the golden rule as presented by a variety of faith traditions.

A book for adults "**Post Secret**" and one for teens and college students "**My Secret**," along with website postsecret.com, which encourage people to share secrets anonymously so they will learn they are not alone in their personal feelings.

SOME BOOKS FOR 2017 WORTH READING AND SHARING

--"**Sailboat Church: Helping Your Church Rethink Its Mission and Practice**" by author and former moderator of the General Assembly Joan S. Gray, has been used in church groups and by Sessions, such as Westminster Presbyterian, Hot Springs, to move congregations from rowboat status, dependent on human effort, to sailboat, relying on Holy Spirit to guide them.

--"**Crazy Busy: A (Mercifully) Short Book About a (Really) Big Problem**" by Kevin DeYoung who applies Biblical tools rather than time management tips to get to the source of the problem of jam-packed schedules and strike a balance between doing nothing and doing it all. Has been effectively used by women's groups.

--"**Chasing God with Three Flat Tires**" is an 8-week Bible discussion guide featuring "The Message" from the series Real Life Stuff for Men on Faith. Men in a small group can learn steps to avoid crashing and burning out in their pursuit of a spiritual life as participants discover personalized application and accountability.

--"**Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World: Finding intimacy with God in the busyness of life**" by Joanna Weaver and its sequel "**Having a Mary Spirit: Allowing God to Change Us from the Inside Out**" both include companion Bible studies for "every woman who's ever felt she isn't godly enough, isn't loving enough, isn't doing enough."

The Presbytery office and the Resource Center will be closed from Friday, Dec. 23 through Monday, Jan. 2 and will reopen on Tuesday, Jan. 3. Thank you to all of our new and veteran patrons, to the faithful Resource Center Advisory Board, to our "mother" committee of the Church and Its Mission for another year, my 17th, of collaborative service to our congregations. May God's richest blessings of fearlessness, peace and joy be yours this Advent, Christmas and Epiphany seasons!

Reminder: I am in the Resource Center on Monday and Wednesday and available by phone (cell 501.337.2360) or email other days.

(Your Resource Center receives funding from the presbytery's Mission of the Church ministry area.)

Presbytery of Arkansas Youth News

Mark your calendar for these 2017 youth events and trips, and watch for more information to come!

Youth Advisory Team Winter Meeting (location tbd) - Jan. 20-21, 2017

Youth at Presbytery (University of the Ozarks, 10th-12th graders) - Feb. 17-18, 2017

Sr. High Youthquake (Ferncliff, 9th-12th graders) - March 31-April 2, 2017

Jr. High Jubilee (Mo Ranch, 6th-8th graders)
July 2-6, 2017

Sr. High Mission Trip with Memphis Youth Mission (Memphis, TN, 8th-12th graders)
July 9-14, 2017

Montreat Youth Conference (Montreat, NC, 8th-12th graders)
July 23-29, 2017

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

"Like" us on Facebook!

Search

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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 new Ministries with Youth, Campus, and Young Adults.)

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Announcement from Church and Its Mission Ministry Area Regarding Cents-Ability Donations

In 2016 Arkansas Presbytery will give the Cents-Ability Offering as follows:

1/3 to Barr Memorial Presbyterian church in Norman to help with their Saturday morning breakfast and food program. This is one of the most depressed areas of our state. Each Saturday they feed up to 100 people a full hot breakfast plus give out bags of groceries to as many as 250 families.

1/3 to STOP HUNGER NOW for the national food program

1/3 to STOP HUNGER NOW for the international food program

For more information on the Cents-Ability donations (including information on how to make suggestions for next year's donations), [click here](#).

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National Conferences Near Arkansas in 2017

Two popular national conferences sponsored by the PC(USA) will be relatively near the Presbytery of Arkansas, so mark your calendars now!

NEXT church renewal group's national gathering is set for Monday through Wednesday, March 13-15, in Kansas City, MO. The theme is Wells & Walls: Well-Being in a Thirsty World based on John 4:1-42.

Big Tent 2017, the official training event in years when General Assembly does not meet, is set for Thursday through Saturday, July 6-8, at Washington University, St. Louis, MO. Based on the motto "Be inspired...Become equipped...Get connected!" Big Tent includes worship, workshops, and the opportunity to engage and connect with other Presbyterians. Watch for more information on both events!

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Disaster Prep Thanks You for Your Donations!

It's the season for giving. Many of you have already given to disaster preparedness (clean-up buckets or hygiene kits) or response (flooding in McGehee or Louisiana or Hurricane Matthew area.) If you would still like to give, the Presbytery Disaster Preparedness and Response Committee (through the presbytery office) or Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (pcusa.org/pda) would welcome your gifts. Both organizations keep funds on hand for the next disaster--and there will be one. We have to stay prepared.

Stay safe this holiday season--and help us stay prepared.

--This message is brought to you by the Presbytery of Arkansas Disaster Preparation and Response Committee. Additional information is available at

<http://www.presbyteryofarkansas.org/frmDisasterResponse.aspx>

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New List of Churches by Region

The 2016 new 4-Region list of churches can be found [here](#).

You can also find this file at the presbytery's website under "Resources | Presbytery Documents."

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Presbyterian Pilgrimage Invites You to April's Event

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 30, 2017. 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 16, 2017.

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Presbytery Office Can Use Gently Used Microwave

Are you retiring a microwave oven?

Your Presbytery Office in Little Rock would be delighted to receive your gently used appliances for our kitchenette. Contact stewart@presbyteryofarkansas.org or phone 501.663.2424x101 and Thank You!

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Presbytery Office Closed For Christmas Holiday

The presbytery office in Little Rock will be closed from December 23rd, 2016 through January 2nd, 2017. Our last business day will be Thursday, December 22nd. Please ensure that year-end mailings are sent with ample time to arrive at the office.

In case of inclement weather, the presbytery office is closed when Little Rock School Districts are closed. We appreciate your patience and apologize for any inconvenience.

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Prayer List for Congregations -- 2017 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](#)

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 [BOB BOEHLER](#)

Moderator of Presbytery [LACY SELLARS](#)

Moderator of the Coordinating Team [ED WILKINSON](#)

Vice Moderator of Presbytery [RUTH HAMILTON](#)

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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 12,000 Presbyterians gathered in 83 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>

Presbytery of Arkansas, 9221 N. Rodney Parham Rd., Little Rock, AR 72227