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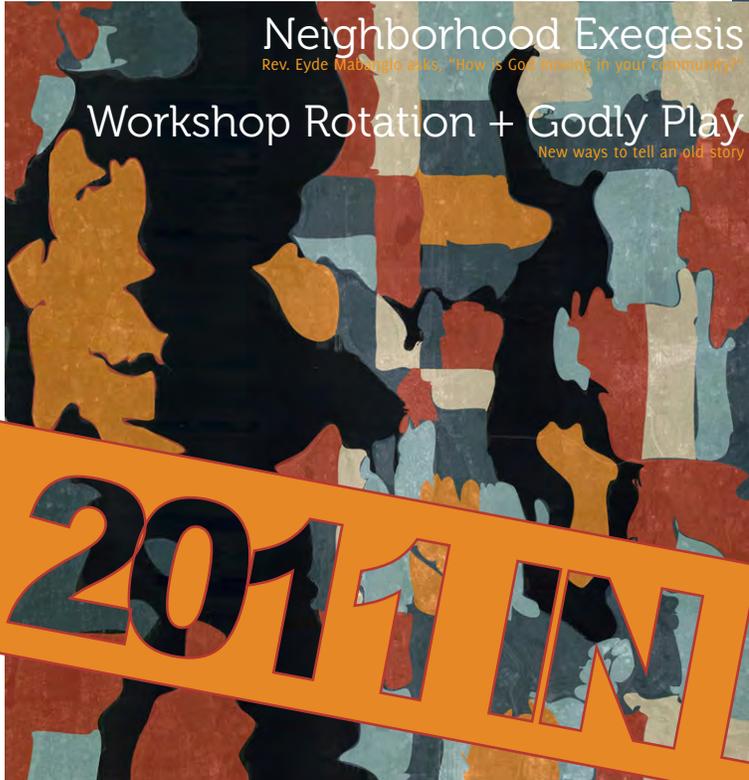
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2011 In Review

# theSOiRit

of the Seattle Presbytery



Neighborhood Exegesis  
Rev. Eyde Mabalajo asks, "How is God moving in your community?"

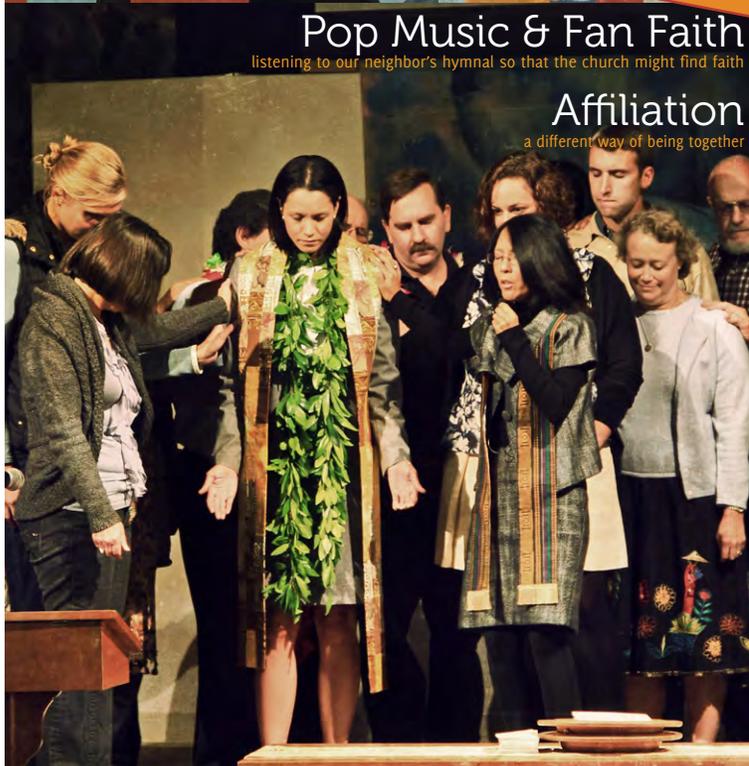
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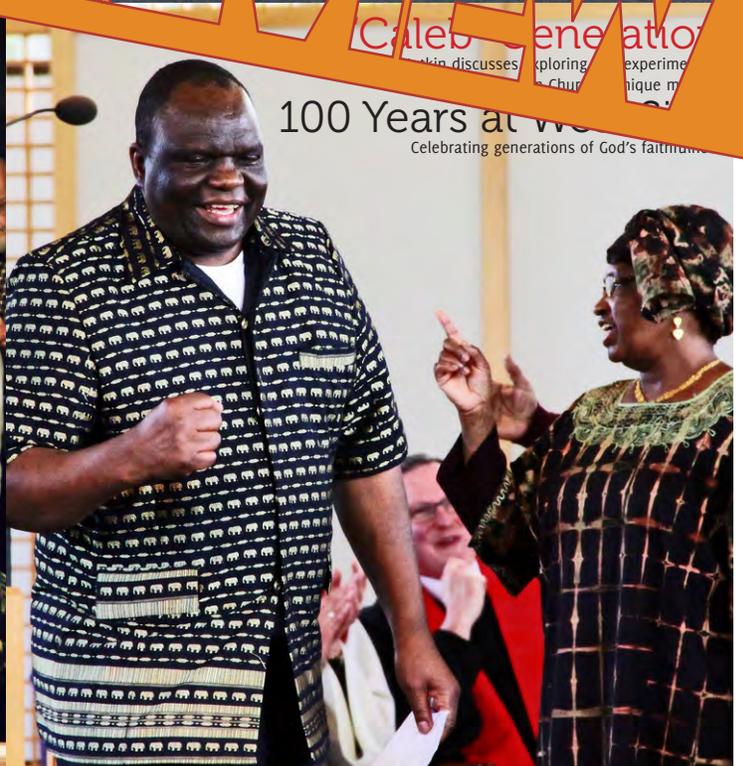
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ENJOY IT.  
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theSOiRit  
of the Seattle Presbytery

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Aaron Willett

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# WELCOME!

a word from  
**Aaron Willett**  
Communications  
Coordinator



Welcome to PresbyFest 2012! In the past year, we relaunched *The Spirit*, a quarterly publication we hope has and will continue to fulfill much the same purpose as PresbyFest itself. Just as you have come here to be encouraged, to learn, and to be stretched in your own ministry, we hope that the stories within these pages will do the same.

In your hands you hold something like a "best of" or a greatest hits from the 2011 run of *The Spirit*. As with each issue, we have selected a variety of articles aimed at celebrating the ministry of our churches and fellowships, as well as providing ideas and resources for ministry to come. *The Spirit* is an ode to the connectional nature of our church, designed to enrich our relationships, and deepen our sense of partnership in and for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In God's Grace & Peace,



By Rev. Sandy Hackett, Pastor, Lake City Pres.

Anybody else looking for great Adult Ed resources? I found one! There is an online video series called *The Bible Plain and Simple* that is being produced by the good folks at First Pres. Bellevue. They've posted a play list for the first two years of a four year series on their site ([bit.ly/ro7Vjp](http://bit.ly/ro7Vjp)).

The class is taught live at FPCB on Wednesday nights, and also streams live on the web for people who want to watch from home and not brave the weeknight commute. Bell-Pres then archives those as podcasts for folks who want to watch on their own schedules. New classes go up every week during each teaching quarter.

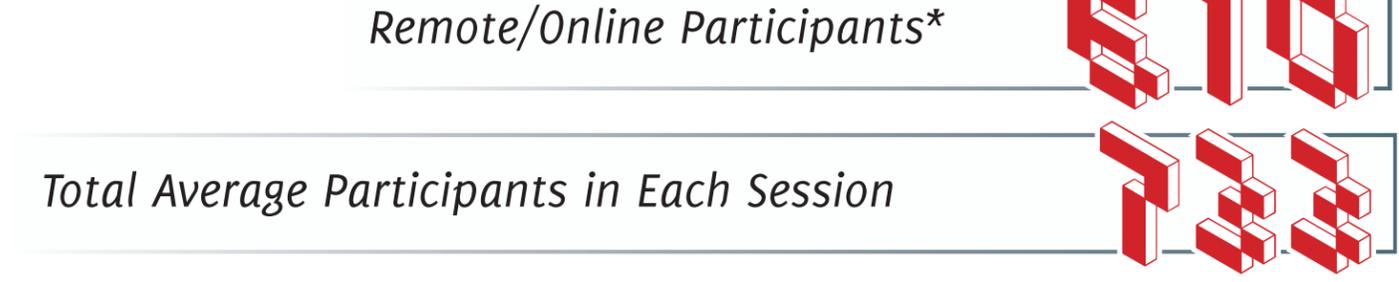
The first time I'd heard about this great resource was driving home from the Whitworth Institute for Ministry with Scott Mann, FPCB's pastor for Christian Growth. They are kind of quiet over in Bellevue about the great work they are doing, so I asked if I could tell some more folks about it.

All of our churches are welcome to participate in this course, drawing on the excellent resources these good teachers have available to them. The video is professionally produced, and a pleasure to watch. The content is substantial, well researched, and engagingly presented. You can play each week's class on any schedule that works for your congregation. Monthly circles? Weekday Bible studies? Small groups? Sunday School? Even just alerting your folks to the possibility of watching on their own is giving them a great tool for developing biblical literacy.

Thanks, Scott Mann! Always glad to find a new way to encourage my congregation!



Rev. Tom Brewer, keeping it plain and simple in the web-based media player.



\*Based on unique number of IP addresses x 1.5, bearing in mind that many online participants are couples—a standard approach for 'counting' those listening to/watching streaming content. Does not include class-size gatherings watching streaming content.



BY AARON WILLETT, SEAPRES COMMUNICATIONS

EARLIER THIS YEAR, THE WHOLE CONGREGATION OF SAMMAMISH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SPENT FOUR WEEKS GATHERING FOR WORSHIP AND A NEW MEMBERS CLASS—SIMULTANEOUSLY. Senior Pastor Rev. Jeff Lincicome hatched an innovative plan with the staff to offer a new member's class as a sermon series. The result? 78 new members joined the church in a culminating ceremony where all members, new and old, were asked to re-up their commitment to Be the Church. Along the way their pastoral staff, elders and deacons were all called upon to carry the banner, reaching out to these new members with open arms.

INVENTIVE BEGINNINGS

Rev. Chris Griggs, Associate Pastor of Adult Discipleship, recalls, "Jeff came up with the idea of taking the content of a new membership class and building a sermon series around it. He called the sermon series Be the Church and asked what does it mean for us to be people of faith, to be connected to followers of Jesus Christ throughout time and all over the world? What does it mean for us to live that out in a particular congregation? What does it mean for us to use our gifts in ministry, and what does it mean to make a commitment to do that together in a body? We gave everyone in the congregation a chance to say, 'I'm in. God has called me to be a part

of the body of Christ in this time and this place, and I'm committing to live my life as part of this body of Christ."

The impetus was a simple desire to remind the whole congregation what it means to be church together. Senior Pastor Rev. Jeff Lincicome saw the potential to merge that with their new members class. "We thought, 'Why don't we do something different? Why don't we [take] what we teach in new member's classes and turn it into a sermon series?'" The idea met two crucial and often ignored needs: To refresh long-time members, and appeal to the busy schedules of regular attenders who struggle to find time for a new member's class. According to Jeff, "The reality is that we have people who have been here for twenty years [without] a new members class. It would give them a chance to review and maybe even re-up their commitment—to say 'Hey, you know what? I joined this church a long time ago, but I'm going to re-join

t h i s

## "We gave everyone in the congregation a chance to say, 'I'm in.'"

church." On the other side of that coin are those who have struggled to find the time: "We have some folks who we've been sending letters about new members classes every year for six years, and they just can't do it. It just doesn't work for them."



Top: Sr. Pastor Jeff Lincicome talks after worship with Kent and Linda Abendroth. Bottom: Pastor Chris Griggs with his son Ryan. Facing: Sammamish members mingle after the service.



In addition to weekly attendance during the Be the Church series, those who wanted to join the church were responsible for covering some class materials on their own,

as well as participating in a dinner series. Chris describes the richness of these dinner gatherings. The dinners were "where groups would come together and get to know each other, build relationships and talk about what membership meant to them, as well as share some ambitions for themselves and their participation in the body of Christ moving forward." The last piece of the puzzle was having each new member meet with an elder or a deacon—what Chris calls "a sort of spiritual concierge"—during their transition into the congregation.

### MEMBERSHIP IN TODAY'S TERMS

One of the challenges faced by the church was promoting what is essentially a counter cultural notion of membership. Especially in the Northwest, being a church member is more of a curiosity than a credit. Chris describes it as being at best an "Inconvenient word." He goes

on, "There are some things that are unfortunate about the word member... it has that connotation from American Express of membership having its privileges. In reality it's almost the opposite: membership has its responsibilities and membership has its consequences. I actually think partner might be a better word. We recognize that what God is doing in me is bigger than just me—it's also being a part of this community." As Jeff puts it, "You don't get the goodies when you become a member. You have just gained an opportunity to serve in a different way."

### A GOOD PROBLEM (OR TWO)

Jeff recalls the surprising initial response from the congregation, "We thought maybe 25-30 people would sign up, which is a tiny bit bigger than our usual new membership class, but not a huge amount. I remember after our first Sunday, when we announced it, Chris came into the office the next day and said, 'We have a big problem! It's a good problem, but it's a big problem!' What we thought we were going to have to do—take care of 25-30 people—just ballooned. It struck a chord. I think for most people, it worked with their schedule. It's something they've always wanted to do, they feel that this is their church, but they were never able to make that commitment."

The follow-through also presents both opportunity and responsibility for the church. "We have these 78 new

members—a lot at once—and so we're trying to think really strategically," says Jeff. "We're trying to use this as a test case to ask, 'How can we make sure that at the end of this year, those 78 have a place of ownership at the church?'" In order to help make that happen, the church staff and lay leaders are checking in with the new members regularly, to make sure they feel like they have a place to serve and a supportive place of community. For Jeff, success is not measured in the number 78, but in the long-term commitment of the new members to the community of faith.

### MAKING MEMBERSHIP TOO EASY?

While aware of the criticism that their model may be too easy, Jeff focuses on the importance of meeting people "where they're at." By bringing the class to the congregation, the bar was lowered, but the hope is with commitment it can be raised again. "Once you have commitment from someone," says Jeff, "you have some ownership and responsibility for them, and they've allowed you to have that in their lives. Before that, we just don't have much ownership. They haven't said that they're officially part of our group."

For now, exciting things are afoot at Sammamish. "Not only did it work as far as the new membership angle," says Jeff, "but it also provides really good mojo for the church to build momentum."



# neighborhood exegesis

how about you?

by Rev. Eyde Mabanglo,  
Catalyzing Missional Communities Committee

**"the word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood."**

**-john 1:14, the message**

About twenty years ago, a pastor friend of mine left his preaching position in order to open a small chain of coffee shops on the Kitsap Peninsula. He said that he had more meaningful conversations with people about spiritual matters in his coffee shops than he ever did as a pastor in a church. Just a few years ago, another pastor friend of mine did the same thing; several Bible study groups now make his coffee shop their weekly home. He just opened his second coffee shop ("The Global Bean") in the new, neighborhood YMCA. These pastors both left the pulpit, but they didn't leave their call or their passion there.

**how about you?** Are you a pastor with a call and a passion to initiate a missional community in our Presbytery? We want to help...

In 2000, Central Kitsap Presbyterian Church's session worked with the Seattle Presbytery to create a satellite campus in Poulsbo, a 15-minute drive from the CKPC 'main campus'. This missional community (granted we didn't call it that back then) based its approach on focusing on the neighbors—their life's dreams, family needs, real fears, and spiritual questions. We learned to listen... to the neighborhood. "North Point" eventually walked through the New Church Development (NCD) process and chartered in 2005. We began worshipping in our new sanctuary this summer which is located within a rural block of the neighborhood's elementary school, junior high, and high school.

**how about you?** Is your session prayerfully considering a missional community within or beyond your local congregation? We want to help...

The Catalyzing Missional Communities Committee (CMC) can help to guide, resource, and encourage many

different kinds of initiatives. Some of those exciting developments involve ethnic groups becoming better grounded in their neighborhoods with welcomed attention to language barriers, family traditions, and worship practices. Some of these fellowships are strategically made up of mixed cultures as well.

**how about you?** Do you or your church see a multicultural opportunity in your neighborhood? We want to help...

Rev. Craig Williamson, the associate for the western office of PC(USA)'s church development, challenged the CMC to consider "neighborhood exegesis." More and more church leaders are successfully engaging in neighborhood exegesis and watching for God's movement in their communities. This situational awareness, humility, and adaptability are important tools in the missional leader's tool belt. Twelve delegates from our Presbytery attended the NCD conference in Florida and received more practical tools to help us move forward in ministry at all levels here in Seattle. For example, in Detroit, a Presbytery is strategizing with local congregations to merge two churches in order to be one stronger missional presence in their community.

**how about you?** Do you have a missional story or strategy that you'd like to share with your fellow presbyters? We want to hear it!

To share or ask questions, please contact the Catalyzing Missional Communities Committee by:

- Checking out the CMC link on the Seattle Presbytery's web page: [www.seattlepresbytery.org](http://www.seattlepresbytery.org)
- Contacting our CMC chair, Rev. Tobin Wilson: [tobin.wilson@lbpc.org](mailto:tobin.wilson@lbpc.org) or [cmc@seattlepresbytery.org](mailto:cmc@seattlepresbytery.org)
- Contacting the Associate Presbyter for Multicultural Ministries, Rev. Eliana Maxim: [eliana@seattlepresbytery.org](mailto:eliana@seattlepresbytery.org)



REV. PAUL SMITH PREACHING: "GOD IS FAITHFUL."  
BY MARK AND LAURINDA O'CONNELL

# GENERATIONS OF FAITHFULNESS

ON MARCH 27TH, 2011  
OVER 700 WORSHIPPERS  
GATHERED AT WEST SIDE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH TO  
CELEBRATE 100 YEARS OF  
GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

Dig a hole in the ground. Insert a seed. Wait...but not passively. In hope of the desired outcome, water and fertilize. Nurture the budding sapling. Protect it from pests and vermin. Talk to it. Water some more. Fertilize a lot. Sometimes, prune it. Revel in the growing tree's strength. Rest under its shade. Share the tree's charms with the children. Depend on it for shelter. Keep watering, pruning, fertilizing, and enjoying for 100 years... and then do it all again. If you did it right (and even if you messed up a few times) you should have a piece of the Tree of Life that sustains generations.

West Side commemorated that Life on Sunday, March 27, 2011 with a grand Centennial Celebration! Almost 750 West Siders – current, former, friends, family, and community – gathered for a day to remember God's

"FOR THE LORD IS GOOD AND HIS LOVE ENDURES FOREVER; HIS FAITHFULNESS CONTINUES THROUGH ALL GENERATIONS."

PSALM 100:5

faithfulness. Filling the Sanctuary and Howell Auditorium in a unified service facilitated by video cameras, screens, and shared music, we worshipped the God who created, preserved, sustains, and holds the future of generations of West Side.

The "Generations of Faithfulness" Centennial Celebration opened with an antiphonal call to worship from Psalm 100, the scripture for our Centennial year, between the Sanctuary and Howell. A trumpet fanfare written by George Steward for West Side's Centennial called us to praise God with congregational singing and prayer. West Side's past was explored through guest Liz Cedergreen from Seattle First Presbyterian, our mother church. A visit from Dr. Mark Matthews, noted pastor of Seattle First Presbyterian during the early part of the century, portrayed by Mark Burton, gave us a glimpse of our beginnings and the seed that was planted in West Seattle.

Throughout the service, we were reminded of the mission work at the heart of West Side's 100 years. Video clips from missionaries serving around the world were interspersed throughout the service.

Captivated by a game of I Spy... led by Children's Director, Ruth Gardner, our children spied God through His faithfulness, His people, and His love. Former pastors were remembered and represented by family members. It was a joy to see children and grandchildren of Pastors Boppell, Hoffmeister, Newquist, Roti, and Smith.

From our past to our present, we remembered when Rev. Paul Smith was called as our pastor in 1981 with the hymn, To God Be the Glory. Greetings from Rev. Scott Lumsden, Executive Presbyterian of Seattle Presbytery, highlighted West Side's role in our community of believers today. Our outstanding music program was show-cased through the anthems of the Chancel and Joyful Sound Children's Choirs.

Knowing that the past is prelude to the future, we turned our eyes forward. In a Holy Spirit-inspired meditation - what many are calling a high water mark in his preaching - Pastor Paul exhorted West Side to live with "an absolute, uncompromising faithfulness to the heart of God revealed in His Word. Let no siren song of culture distract you." He went on to admonish the congregation, "Let no flattery deceive you. Let no threat terrify

you and compromise your message. God is faithful. His Word is true. And Truth alone is relevant - through all generations!"

Pastor Bryan Burton gave us a commission from Romans 12. The high point of the service was perhaps one of West Side's finest moments. The skillful orchestrations of Carreen Smith, Director of Music, brought choir, musicians, and congregation together singing *God Our Help in Ages Past, Our Hope for Years to Come*.

On that note, West Side gathered in fellowship over a light lunch served in the downstairs Fellowship Hall and Howell Auditorium. Joyful shouts of recognition were heard as old friends found each other, and the afternoon was filled with laughter at shared memories, introductions to new friends from past and current members, and recollections of God's faithfulness.



Facing page: Rev. Paul Smith. Clockwise from top-left: Rev. Ron Rice, The Joyful Sound Choir, Rev. Bryan Burton, and the musical contributions of Christopher Howter, George Steward, Tom Hibben and Sarah Packard.

Images by Ken McLaughlin.



## FIVE Q'S WITH REV. TASHA HICKS

By Aaron Willett, SeaPres Communications

Tasha was installed on October 9th at Mt. View Presbyterian Church in White Center.

*Please share about your own walk with God, and how you came to receive this call to Mt. View.*

While I grew up attending an Assemblies of God church, I came to a deeper understanding of my life in relationship to Jesus Christ through a friendship in high school and through Young Life. I learned of a God that was willing to engage in my life and in my questions. My heart was unveiled to a faith that saw no partiality in the gifts that are given to the diversity of God's people. And as I began to understand my belonging to God through Jesus Christ and being created in God's image, I longed for others to know this as well.

I was raised on the Muckleshoot Indian Reservation in Auburn, Washington, though ethnically I am Hawaiian, Chinese, Japanese, Irish, German, Dutch, and Welsh. My brothers and I refer to this as "chopsuey." This kaleidoscope of cultures and ethnicities has been the root of my growing passion for the church to be engaged in God's work in the world and to be representative of the diversity of God's beloved creation.

My sense of call to ministry began when I was living my life dream on a full-ride basketball scholarship at a Division I school. It was at this point when I felt the Holy Spirit prompting me to give it all up and to follow God in a new direction. Long story short, the words of John 14:27 enveloped my heart; I gave up my scholarship and was moved to go to Romania for a year to serve amongst Romanian and Gypsy youth. I went on to explore ministry at World Vision and at Safe Place, a nonprofit in Hawaii working with children of incarcerated parents. These experiences stirred my passion

for pastoral ministry and led to a two-year internship at First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley with the Mission, Outreach, and Evangelism Department.

For the past three years, while attending seminary, I have also had the tremendous gift of serving as the Director of Volunteers for Faith Network of the East Bay. Faith Network is a nonprofit in Oakland, California that seeks to be a tangible presence of God's love by coming alongside of children in under-resourced schools and mobilizing caring adults from local churches, businesses, and the community. During this time, I was also engaged in a yearlong internship at St. Andrew Presbyterian Church in Marin City working with a solo pastor who had walked with this church from redevelopment to being self-sustaining.

I have been profoundly shaped by my experiences. When I came before Session at First Pres Berkeley a couple years ago, one of the elders asked me what I envision as my first call and I responded that my passion is to serve a church within a diverse environment among those on the margins of society, and a church that is living out their faith in the community in tangible ways. Mt. View's commitment to bear witness to Jesus Christ within the beautifully diverse context of White Center feels like a convergence of my experiences and passions. Two of my closest mentors, after reading about Mt. View, encouraged me to submit my PIF. As I read about the vision and mission of Mt. View and came to know the people on the Pastor Nominating Committee, I felt a deep resonance and had a visceral response of excitement for what God is doing in this community. There is a sense of expectation and hope that Jesus Christ is doing a transformative work in this place and the people of Mt. View are committed and excited to be a part of what God is doing. I

love this. I am absolutely thrilled to be serving Mt. View and look forward with great anticipation to see how the Spirit will continue this growing work.

*You have now usurped Rev. Mark Zimmerly from Madrona as the youngest solo-pastor in the presbytery. How does your (relative) youth impact your ministry?*

I may be younger than Mark, but I am certain I have more gray hair than him! More seriously though, in terms of the impact of my relative youth, one aspect is being able to learn from the wisdom of those who have faithfully served the church before me, while also coming with an instinct to think outside of the box. Like each generation, I think we grapple with what it means to be the church today, in our time and our context. I am open to dreaming and working with teams to think creatively about new ways of being the church and engaging in ministry. I desire to have a wide spectrum of people participating in the dialogue, and perhaps my youth enables me to more easily invite the young folks to the table. I have a great amount of excitement, believing that the Holy Spirit longs to breathe fresh life into the church. That said, I hesitate to say this is a direct reflection of my youth, because I know there are a lot of leaders with this underlying passion and vision, but perhaps my youth and being a first-call pastor allows me more freedom to explore as I discover what it means to live into this call to pastoral ministry.

*What can you share with us about the congregation at Mt. View? What aspects of your ministry there are you most excited about?*

I recently met with someone from the congregation who described Mt. View as "A home church with a building." I think this description captures the family-feel, hospitality, and sense of welcome that is so central to the culture of Mt. View. I mean, where else do people sing Happy Birthday to one another at the end of service?!

Coming into my third month, I continue to be amazed by the array of gifted and caring people that God has brought into this relatively small community. The people are genuine in their love for one another and in their welcome to others. I am excited by the energy and desire of the people and the honest conversations we are having about what it means to be the church. We are learning and exploring together what it looks like to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ, who share our lives and our resources abundantly. I am excited by the commitment and love we have for the children and youth in our community and our partnerships with Union Gospel Mission and the YES Foundation that lead us in these ministries. I am excited and grateful for God's provision and the fact that we look back on this past year in complete awe for the ways God has provided. More concretely, I am excited about the development of a mural and

patchwork project that will incorporate the artistic gifts of the congregation and invite everyone to participate in the upcoming Lenten season.

*You mentioned you recently got a second job. How many hours are you working at Mt. View, and how are you making ends meet? Do you consider this to be bi-vocational ministry?*

I will be serving Mt. View part-time, 25+ hours a week. In terms of making ends meet, I have to say as far as transitions go, this one has been really smooth; I feel very held in God's grace and absolutely trust that God will provide for my needs. This has already happened from the timing and location of my housing, to building relationships with people, to reconnecting with family, friends and mentors in the area. Most recently God's provision has come by way of a second job. I was just hired to be the head coach for girls' basketball at Evergreen High School, which is a block away from the church and is where several of our youth attend. It is pretty funny, because members of Mt. View now make up the coaching staff for girls volleyball, cheer, football, tennis, and girls basketball! It is definitely bi-vocational ministry and I am excited for the opportunity to be more fully invested in the lives of the youth and families in our community.

*Are there specific ways we can be holding you, your work and your congregation in prayer?*

Yes!

- For God's wisdom to be guiding the congregation and me as we continue to have conversation about what it means to be the church, especially during this time of transition
- Prayers that we would be attentive and open to the Spirit's leading
- For the elders of Mt. View to be growing together as spiritual leaders
- For our children and youth
- For me as I learn and grow as a pastor
- For God's continued provision and the resources to fix current leaks and other maintenance things around the church, so we have a safe and welcoming gathering place
- That this would continue to be a place where people feel welcome and have a sense of belonging not only to Mt. View, but to Jesus Christ.



# GETTING COPIES

## NOT BAD CONTRACTS

BY REV. KEVIN NOLLETTE, ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE PRESBYTER

Many churches enter into contracts for copy machine, phone and internet services, and other office equipment. Sometimes, the first time the contract is read is at the point that a problem arises. Obviously, this is too late, but this is often the time I receive a call for help.

So, here are some principles in order to approach these contracts.

1. **Session should take specific action** to determine who has the authority and under what circumstances to enter into contracts. Any substantial contract should require specific Session approval.
2. **Read the contract.** If you have any questions consult with an attorney. The expense of this consultation could be minor considering the expense of these contracts.
3. **Remember, everything is negotiable.** Every company has standard contracts, but they are written for the benefit of the company. Consider what ways you may want to protect the church.

Some particular issues to which you may pay attention:

- What is the length of the contract?
- What is the escalation clause of the contract? How does this compare to the current rate of inflation? Remem-

ber these are negotiable.

- The provisions for terminating the contract, whether early or upon completion. What are the costs upon termination? Do you need to pay for shipping costs to return the machine? Are there lease termination fees? Other challenging terms?
- Does this contract cover maintenance expenses? What repairs are not included in the maintenance agreement? What about changing technologies, and drivers as other connected equipment changes?
- Are you being pressured to make an immediate decision? For example “this is a limited time offer.” If so, when the company really wants your business they will extend the deadline.
- If there is no room for negotiation, look for another vendor.
- Lastly, if you are having trouble with a vendor or contract, seek out assistance. Ask to speak to a supervisor. Have another person review the contract. When necessary, seek legal counsel.

**Remember, everything is negotiable.**

Feel free to consult with me if I can be of assistance.

Blessings,  
Kevin  
kevin@seattlepresbytery.org

For more, visit [bit.ly/pLbhM8](http://bit.ly/pLbhM8)

# workshop rotation

## godly play

new ways to share an old story

By Aaron Willett, SeaPres Communications

One Sunday morning, I witnessed a magic trick cast as a complex children’s sermon whereby a coin passing through an apparently impenetrable barrier created a metaphor for our own passage into heaven. As I sat there, befuddled by the theological implications and confused by the analogy, I realized that I wasn’t the only one—the children clearly shared my lack of comprehension. I asked myself, “Isn’t there a better way?”

Turns out that there is: story and repetition.

Two Sunday school curriculum models have emerged that meet these essential criteria. While they are distinct in their approaches, both Godly Play and Workshop Rotation teach from the story first. They are tactile—relying on sight and touch as much as the spoken word—and offer a number of ways for children to find their own place in the story. Both of these models are now being used in a number of churches across our presbytery.

## godly play

Based on the Montessori movement, Godly Play is fluid and tactile. According to Jennifer Reeve-Parker, Director of Ministries to Children & Families at Mercer Island Pres., “It really allows time for kids to see the story in this really playful way. The wording is very specific and Godly play has this amazing routine to it.” Each Sunday, as the children enter the room, they become connected by ritual. Jennifer recalls the specific wording used to prepare the group, “This is a special place, and in this place we have all the time that we need. We can walk more slowly and talk more quietly because we know that we are with God and listening to God.”

Dani Forbess, University Presbyterian’s Faith Formation Lead, describes the opportunity found in the fluidity and freedom, “One of the most appealing things about the Godly Play rhythm is the freedom that it affords to the children. This can feel unsettling at times, especially as both children and teacher are adjusting to the new rhythm. But as it develops, it allows active boys to do the very thing they need to do – be active with the story! It also allows for more reflective children to get lost in the story, if they so choose. Whereas, the ones who prefer a more social approach can engage with a small group of children and work together on one story. The opportunity to engage the story in a way unique to oneself abounds.”

Part of the routine embraced in Godly Play is the liturgical calendar. Using a felt calendar, the children of MIPC (from four years old through second grade) mark the passage of time in liturgical colors. The colors provide another touchstone to connect the story of the Bible to their lives. Jennifer says, “They love getting-ready season, which is Advent... It’s really fun, and it’s a great way of teaching our



“Godly Play places a very heavy emphasis on inviting kids into the wonder of the story and not giving them what you think God is trying to say through the story.” – Jennifer Reeve-Parker

church story.”

The richness of Godly Play is felt in more than ritual—each week the story is told not just in words, but with “manipulatives”: wooden figures and miniature props. Using the desert sand box, Jennifer showed me how the story of Abram and Sarai would be enacted, moving the figures across the sand, “...And then you go to the next place and you see their footprints in the sand all the way along. There’s always something to watch when you’re hearing a Godly Play story.” Dani describes children as young as three using the manipulatives to engage in a way that is personal and unique. She shares that the freedom this creates “is both challenging and powerful.”



Each week, Dan Shafer and Camille Morgan lead CHP’s B.A.S.E. camp in songs that help to reinforce the rotation’s theme.

## workshop rotation model

The Workshop Rotation Model gives children the opportunity to learn one Bible story over a period of several weeks across a number of different workshops. Each workshop has a theme around which the activity is centered. Possible workshops include art, music, science, cooking, drama, story, computers, movies, and games.

At MIPC, where both models are used, Jennifer and her crew of teachers first introduce the Bible story, then encourage the children to interact with it and “try it on.” Whether it’s through an art project, watching a movie, or acting it out—[they] interact with it and then talk about it in small groups and figure out how it applies.”

Workshop Rotation allows a great deal of customization in each church community. Many curriculum resources are shared freely at [rotation.org](http://rotation.org), and more are available for purchase. As Jennifer says, “You can really choose and make it your own.”

Tonia Davidson, Capitol Hill Presbyterian’s Children and Family Ministries Director, spoke of their own process of figuring out how the model “fit uniquely for our church.”



Left: CHP’s The Table: Chef Monty, teaches Kally R., Nora P., and Anna C. about making stuffing during the Word Became Flesh rotation. The stuffing made by each of the BASE Camp classes was used by New Horizon’s for their Christmas dinner. Center: CHP’s Map-It-Out Rotation. Rev. Sara Koenig, SPU Professor of Old Testament studies, uses an archaeological dig to help the children deepen their understanding of the Hebrew situation in Egypt. Right: Bringing Scripture to life in MIPC’s Bible Improv workshop. (Images courtesy of CHP and MIPC.)

Eventually they arrived at B.A.S.E. (Biblical And Spiritual Equipping) Camp and based their workshop titles around that theme. Their workshops include Rock Solid Productions (drama), the Story Telling Tent, Map it Out, Creation Station, Zion Flicks, the Table (cooking) and the Apostle’s Workout (gross motor).

Each workshop room is decorated to fit its theme. CHP’s Story Tent is draped floor to ceiling with flowing fabric and pillows. MIPC’s movie theater room is just like a small theater with tiered seating and low lighting. The time invested in these rooms pays dividends measured in excitement and attention span.

One of the advantages seen by Tonia at CHP is a greater involvement of men in leading workshops, “especially when I’m needing to recruit around specific talents.” She shared about men being involved as actors, artists, teaching science lessons and even one man who “did a workshop on baking that tied into the [Lord’s] prayer.”

## engaging children and teachers

Dani, Jennifer and Tonia all spoke of how the depth of the biblical story in both Godly Play and Workshop Rotation feeds student and teacher alike. They related times when parents have been surprised by how well their kids know the biblical narrative. Jennifer talked about how the children are more attuned to the liturgical colors in the sanctuary than many of the adults in worship.

Workshop Rotation and Godly Play are designed to pull children into the Bible’s story, helping them to find their own place within its pages.

### FURTHER READING

To learn more, visit [www.rotation.org](http://www.rotation.org) and [www.godlyplay.org](http://www.godlyplay.org).



Left: CHP’s Map-It-Out: In the Map-It-Out room, the children look at how to apply the Bible story to their lives today and to the rest of the world. Center: Kory Davidson, playing Peter in CHP’s Storytelling Tent, tells the children about his encounter with Jesus on the beach. Right: MIPC kids build community in the Recreation “workshop.” (Images courtesy of CHP and MIPC.)

# TUMEKUTANA

By Rev. Lynell Caudillo, Marcus Whitman Pres.

It was an intriguing invitation. It became a life-changing experience.

The invitation was to participate in Tumekutana 2011 in Kigali, Rwanda. Tumekutana (“we come together” in Kiswahili) is the vision of Caryl Weinberg, a former PC(USA) missionary and current Director of Missions on the staff of First Presbyterian Church in Evanston, Illinois.

Throughout Central Africa, Caryl, a Registered Nurse, served as an AIDS educator starting in the late 1990s. In her work she met women who were leading significant ministries in churches, often under challenging circumstances. It was her dream to bring these women together and introduce them to each other. The first Tumekutana conference held in Nairobi, Kenya in 2007 was such a success, that a planning committee was formed and began immediately to plan a second conference. Rwanda was chosen as the location, and the theme “Women as Agents of Peace, Healing, and Reconciliation” was selected, to take place October 16-20, 2011 in the capital city of Kigali.

I was pleased to accept Caryl’s invitation and began the necessary preparations: immunizations for typhoid, yellow fever, anti-malaria prescriptions, etc. I had already been praying for the conference, having been the US prayer coordinator for the first Tumekutana. However, I was unprepared for the impact this event would have on my life.

The US Team included Caryl, Sonia Bodi and Gwen Ruckers from First Presbyterian Church Evanston, Susan Skoglund, a representative from Presbyterian Women, a pastor from South Carolina, Helen Harrison-Coker, Rev. Debbie Braaksma from Louisville (coordinator of mission in Africa for the PC(USA)), and myself. Once in Kigali, we were joined by Dr. Amy McAuley from Zambia (chair of the Presbyterian Medical Benevolence Fund), Rev. Debbie Blane (from Seattle, currently serving in South Sudan), and Rev. Janet Guyer (serving in South Africa).

Arriving a few days in advance of the official beginning of the conference, the US team helped prepare registration materials, and shared responsibilities with the Rwandan Host committee. Invitation letters, visas, and travel arrangements were worked on until the last minute as communications and internet access vary greatly from country to country. Fifty-five women from 18 different African countries—professors, pastors, and leaders of Presbyterian and Reformed women—converged on Kigali!

On Sunday October 16th, we were divided into six groups. Each group was hosted by a different congregation in the Kigali area for worship and lunch. I was invited to preach at the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Kigali, where there are 3 services, one in English, one in French and one in Kinyarwanda. The two hour (plus!) service was lively, with three different music groups leading the congregation in song and dance. Far from the “frozen chosen,” Rwandan worship is aerobic! I was thankful for the warm hospitality of Rev. Therese Makamakuza who translated my sermon into French, and welcomed me and the other Tumekutana delegates so graciously.

The conference began “officially” Sunday afternoon at the Ikigio Isano Conference Center as the delegates, wearing their brightly colored national dress, lined up to process into the Opening Ceremony which featured introductions of honored dignitaries and guests. Two choirs from

local Presbyterian churches provided stirring vocal and dance performances. The opening address by the Rev. Dr. Nyambura Njoroge, broke open the conference theme: Women as Agents of Peace, Healing and Reconciliation from both Old and New Testament perspectives in the African context—a very auspicious beginning.

Through daily worship, plenary sessions, small group discussions, shared meals and personal conversations, the depth of faith and passion for peace that these women possess was clearly revealed. Lasting friendships formed as women studied and prayed together, discovering common cultural issues and discussing strategies for change. Topics addressed included: the education and economic empowerment of women, the impact of political conflict and violence on women, including the role of women in ensuring gender-justice in the church and community, among many others.

No doubt, the most profound experience was the day the group visited the Kigali Memorial Centre, which provides a dignified burial location for over 250,000 remains of those who died in the 1994 Genocide, as well as tasteful exhibits which document and educate about genocidal violence in Rwanda and elsewhere. This was a highly charged emotional afternoon, not only for our Rwandan hosts, but for many of the women who live with the daily reality of civil unrest and the threat of armed conflict in their own countries. That evening we heard from a pastor and a dozen members of his congregation—female survivors and male perpetrators of the Genocide—about the life-changing work of Christ that has brought about healing and true reconciliation among them.

This transformative love of Christ compels the women of Tumekutana to be agents of change in their homes, churches and communities. Here, peacemaking is not just a good idea—it is a personal reality. For these women, a personal relationship with Christ is the locus for all peacemaking efforts.

There is not time or space to tell the stories of Samuel, a young Ugandan man with whom I shared the 8 hour flight from Amsterdam to Kigali, or of Ariet from Ethiopia, Anisi from Rwanda, Milcah from South Sudan, and so many others whose journeys touched me deeply. Because of this experience I have gained a new perspective on my own church and culture, as well as God’s call to be peacemakers in Jesus’ name!

If you would like to hear more, I am available to share in greater detail with your study group, class or congregation. You can contact me at (206) 878-2013.



**HERE,  
PEACEMAKING IS  
NOT JUST A GOOD  
IDEA – IT IS A  
PERSONAL REALITY.**



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