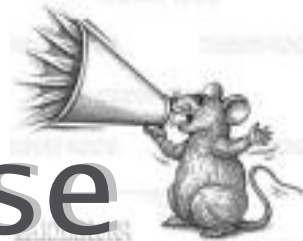


# The Church Mouse



Peoples Presbyterian Church, Milan, MI



## Working Together in Love

By Pastor Kelly Boubel Shriver

### Special points of interest:

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- Vacation Bible School Details, Pg. 4
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In the past week, I've become more familiar with COBO Hall in downtown Detroit than I ever thought I'd be! The 221<sup>st</sup> General Assembly (GA 221) of the PC(USA) met in COBO Hall for a week of meetings, discernment, and decision making for the future of our church. The General Assembly is our national gathering, and it takes place every two years.

During the GA, commissioners elected by the Presbyteries (over 600 in all) study and discuss proposals sent in by individuals, churches, and Presbyteries. Some of the proposals call our church into further study and reflection, while others move us to action. The commissioners study the issues in committee, and then each committee makes recommendations to the entire body, which then votes and makes a final decision.

This year, as always, there were dozens of proposals considered and prayed over. Some of the choices made by our church were relatively uncontroversial and largely in line with our theology and practice. For example, GA 221 appealed to our church and government to introduce stricter background checks and ban semi-automatic assault rifles. Other votes were controversial, and came after hours and hours of intensive lobbying, debate, prayer, and discernment. You can read the details about two of those issues (Same-Sex Marriage and Divestment) later in this newsletter.

After spending a week assisting with daily worship and observing the work of General Assembly, there are a few reflections I would like to share:

- First, although Robert's Rules of Order aren't everyone's cup of tea, they provided a beautiful structure and framework for the work of our GA. As I observed the work of the commissioners, I had the nearly constant thought: this is how our US Congress is supposed to be working! Commissioners disagreed sharply at points, over deep and difficult issues, but they never broke the ethos of civility and kindness that pervaded the meeting. It was a truly bizarre (and wonderful!) experience to see people disagreeing deeply, and yet treating each other with uncommon compassion and care. To me, it was a tremendous example of Christian love at work. Decisions were respected, debate was moderated, and opposing commissioners were seen singing and praying together following the most controversial votes.

Continued on Page 2...

## Continued from Page 1...

- Second, the work of the GA is made possible by years of careful thought, planning, prayer, and discernment. The issues debated this year were not new issues. Many of these questions have been taken up by PCUSA pastors, churches, national staff members, and previous GAs for years if not decades. For example, the decision to divest from Caterpillar, Motorola Solutions, and Hewlett Packard was made because our Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee (our money-ethics people) tried to advocate for a change to company polity for over 10 years, and was repeatedly turned away. Their hard work laid the foundation from which our GA did its work. We truly are a connectional church, and our work, I believe, will bear fruit for future generations.
- Third, and most importantly, it was a gift to experience the vastness of the PCUSA. We are a large, diverse, complicated body, but we are one church. I loved getting to worship alongside 4,000 other Presbyterians, bound together by songs and prayers we all know and love. It was like meeting long-lost relatives you didn't know you have. We are a connectional body, and the great strength of our church is in being connected to one another: big/small, urban/rural, rich/poor, Southern/Northern, Korean/Anglo/Latino, Latina/African American/Immigrant. We are one Presbyterian body, brought together by our common goal to love and serve Jesus. What a gift to be in ministry together!



***Here we stand, so to speak:*** THE 221ST GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)  
DETROIT, MICHIGAN — JUNE 14-21, 2014

BY LESLIE SCANLON, *Outlook* national reporter  
and JACK HABERER, *Outlook* editor

**Following years of debate**, the 2014 General Assembly decided to act — choosing to divest from three American companies whose products support Israel's occupation of Palestine, and granting PC(USA) ministers permission to perform same-sex marriages in civil jurisdictions where such marriages are legal.

Realizing that their actions would please some and alienate others both in the United States and overseas, commissioners also pleaded for reconciliation with those who would disagree. "In no way is this a reflection of a lack of love for our Jewish brothers and sisters," moderator Heath Rada said immediately after the divestment vote, one of the first by an American mainline Protestant denomination.

Asked after the votes on same-sex marriage how much it would cost to send representatives to each presbytery for conversations about unity, Stated Clerk Gra-dye Parsons said he wasn't sure, but "the cost of not doing this is higher."

### SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ASSEMBLY:

**MODERATOR.** The committee chose as its moderator Heath Rada (christened #modeRada on Twitter), the only ruling elder among three candidates, and a hearty North Carolinian who selected as his vice-moderator his demographic opposite: Larissa Kwong Abazia, a young Chinese-American pastor from New York. From the start, the young adult advisory delegates (YAADs) resonated with the white-haired Rada, who passed out Heath bars and danced during breaks on the platform.

Continued on Page 3...

## Continued from Page 2...

**DIVESTMENT.** Two years after a GA rejected a similar proposal by just two votes, commissioners gasped when the divestment vote result was posted – 310-303 – for a proposal that the PC(USA) begin phased divestment of about \$16.5 million from three companies that provide equipment used by the Israeli military in the occupation of Palestine: Caterpillar, Hewlett-Packard and Motorola Solutions. The assembly did specify that its action was “not to be construed” as support of the global Boycott, Divest and Sanctions (BDS) movement.

**SAME-SEX MARRIAGE.** In response to the contention that the denomination’s restrictions were impeding pastors’ ability to provide pastoral care to committed same-sex couples in their churches, the GA approved two measures to permit ministers to perform same-gender marriages in jurisdictions where legal (at present, 19 states plus the District of Columbia

An authoritative interpretation, approved 371-238 (61 percent in favor), took effect immediately after the assembly adjourned, giving PC(USA) ministers freedom of conscience to perform same-sex marriages. The assembly also voted 421-175 (71 percent in favor) to recommend for ratification by the presbyteries a constitutional amendment adjusting the definition of Christian marriage, changing the phrase “a man and a woman” to “two people, traditionally a man and a woman.”

Both actions support freedom of conscience. The proposed amendment says explicitly, “Nothing herein shall compel a teaching elder to perform nor compel a session to authorize the use of church property for a marriage service” that either of them “believes is contrary” to their “discernment of the Holy Spirit and their understanding of the Word of God.”

Adoption of the amendment requires ratification by 87 of the 172 presbyteries, the votes to be taken over the next 12 months.

**BELHAR CONFESSION.** The assembly approved recommending for presbyteries’ ratification (by two-thirds vote) adding the Belhar Confession, written in South Africa and focused on justice and reconciliation, to the PC(USA)’s Book of Confession.

**BROKEN PRESBYTERIAN RELATIONS.** Already 350 churches have left the PC(USA) for other denominations over the past four years. Now more departures are expected. Also, Hunter Farrell, director of World Mission, said preliminary inquiries indicate 17 of the denomination’s 54 global-partner denominations may break relations with the PC(USA) over the same-sex marriage decision.

**LANGUAGE ABOUT ISRAEL.** The assembly disavowed a controversial study guide, “Zionism Unsettled,” produced by the Israel Palestine Mission Network. The commissioners overwhelmingly rejected a proposal to trim back references to Israel in liturgical materials published by the church.

**GUN VIOLENCE.** The assembly appealed to fellow Presbyterians to work to reduce gun violence by advocating for stricter background checks and a ban on semi-automatic assault rifles.

**FOSSIL FUELS.** Despite pleas from the YAADs that “we can’t wait” to protect the earth, the assembly voted not to divest from fossil fuel companies, choosing instead to explore related issues that might lead to action by a future assembly.

**DRONES.** The assembly passed a resolution criticizing secrecy in the U.S. military’s use of drones for surveillance and targeted attacks, calling for legislation governing the use of military drones.

**YOUNG ADULT COMMISSIONERS?** A proposal to turn YAADs into voting YACs failed, given that the new title would not require them to be ordained elders.

**MID COUNCILS.** The assembly approved consolidating the number of synods from the current 16 to somewhere between 10 and 12 reconfigured synods.



# Christian Education: learning and fun, all in one!!

By Carole London, Christian Education Committee Chair

For Memorial Day, we brought out our small American flags which the youth placed along both sidewalks leading to the church, as well as placing them along the common sidewalk. It always looks so patriotic as we honor all the brave men and women who have fought, or are currently fighting for our country.



Youth Sunday was on June 1. Many of our youth were involved in the readings of the Call to Worship, Scriptures, and Benediction. They acted as ushers, played musical instruments, and sang a song, as well as participating in the Genesis Bell Choir (which will be missed until we see them again in the fall). Everyone who assisted the Christian Education department over the past year was honored with an angel pin that read "I Thank God for You."



We had two college graduates in 2014, Justin Fugate and Adam Lawver. They were each given a special pen with the inscription "All things are possible with God." Congratulations! The service was well attended, and we really appreciate everyone's constant support for the youth of our church!

On Father's Day, the youth made special "shirt and tie" cards, along with some uniquely decorated paper/bag clips.



## Workshop of Wonders

Vacation Bible School is July 14 - 18, 2014

Come and join us! Bring a friend!



Vacation Bible School will be July 14 - 18, from 6 pm to 8 pm. All children from two years of age to sixth graders are welcome to join us. The theme is "Workshop of Wonders" or "WOW!" Rivet, a huge ant, will be helping us learn our daily verses. Teachers are in place, and the lessons and activities are being finalized for this exciting week!

Our Mission Project will be "Raising the Roof" as we raise money to help replace the roof at the Mercy House in Ann Arbor. The Local Outreach Project will be to collect at least 80 bottles of Body Wash to be given to the Milan Food Bank at the Vineyard Church. Feel free to drop off the Body Wash at PPC anytime during the week.

We will have Crazy Shoe Day, Backwards/Inside Out Day and Pajama Day. There will be fun science demonstrations on two of the nights, along with our special t-shirts, creative snacks, "carnival style" recreation and upbeat worship times.

On the last evening, Friday, there will be a family potluck at 6 pm, which will start immediately following a short worship time. We will share both food and what we have learned. After the potluck, we'll have our first-ever, huge and amazing Science Magic Show outside the Fellowship Hall, presented by our own Ruth Ann and Dan Fraser, who are both college chemistry professors. It will be sure to WOW everyone, young and old alike, and will definitely be a must see!!



Hope to see you at VBS this year!

# Mission and Outreach needs you to volunteer

By Sue Barney, Mission and Outreach Co-Chair

The Mission and Outreach Committee will be welcoming the youth group fundraising team of JettRide on July 29, as they make their way across eight states, by hosting a lunch for them when they pass through our area. During their past campaigns to raise awareness for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, they have enjoyed making a stop at Clear Water Beach just south of Milan. Representatives from PPC's Mission and Outreach Committee plan to meet them there with a picnic lunch when they stop for a break. If you recall, this is the fundraising group that stayed overnight at our church last year, and Pastor Kelly and her family hosted a barbecue at the manse, and then we provided a light breakfast for them as well. If you would like more information, or to see the team that will be riding this year, you can visit their website at <http://jettride.jettfoundation.org/team/>

The Mission and Outreach Committee is continuing to ask for volunteers to help serve dinner at the Riverside Community Meal project on the fourth Wednesday of each month at the First Presbyterian Church, Ypsilanti. Workers are needed on Wednesday, July 23, and Wednesday, August 27. Thank you everyone for your continued support of this and all of our on-going Mission projects. You really do make a difference!



*Generosity* changes everything.

## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS from June 18, 2014

By Nancy Kuzniar, Clerk of Session



**Christian Education:** Vacation Bible School will be July 14 – 18, with Workshop of Wonders as the theme. Lessons and plans for the week-long program are being created. If anyone would like to help, contact Carole London. The Mission project for the week will be to help buy roofing materials for Mercy House in Ann Arbor.

**Mission and Outreach:** About 115 people were served at the Chicken Broil on May 23. Net proceeds will be donated to the Military Moms group and the Vietnam Veterans group. Ken and Carole London and Sue Barney worked at the Riverside meal for the homeless on May 28. Sue volunteered from the Mission Committee to work on the Mercy House project during the "week of service." Mission will host a lunch for the JettRide bicycle group in July. A grocery cart full of food was delivered to Aid in Milan on June 2. They are always very appreciative of our generosity.

**Stewardship:** A special ad hoc committee has been formed to identify a number of urgently needed major repairs to church facilities, and to determine ways to fund those repairs. Committee members include Stewardship chair Steve Barney, Buildings and Grounds chair Jack Cranson, Treasurer Ken London, Pastor Kelly, and Jim Cullip, former Stewardship chair and our current President of the Corporation.

**Worship and Music:** A policy for saving DVD discs of services has been developed by the Worship and Music Committee. The persons recording worship services are using the procedure, and it seems to be working very smoothly.

**Treasurer:** Net non-committed money at the end of May was \$17,055.25.

# Stewardship: Building Campaign to start soon...



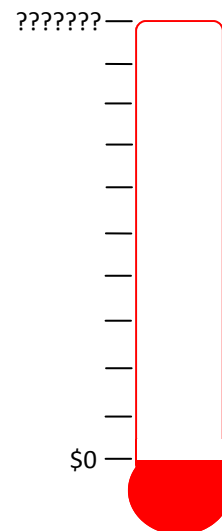
By Steve Barney, Stewardship Committee Chair

This month, we would like to let you know of some major repairs that our church is in need of, and how we will propose to fund these major items. As many of you have probably noticed, there are a number of areas in the church where you can see damage from water leaks. We are in need of new shingles over the main section of the roof. This is an immediate need. It will have to be done before next winter, and will cost approximately \$20,000. Likewise, the exterior wood surfaces of the church need to be painted before the winter months hit us. This will cost approximately \$4,000. In our heating system, we have one motor burned out that needs replacement, and other motors that need new bearings. These costs could be at least \$2,000. We also need to assess the cost of replacing the pneumatic controls on our heating and cooling system with electrical controls. While the pneumatic controls were state of the art at the time they were put in many years ago, it is very difficult at this time to even have them serviced, as the industry has moved away from these types of controls. We are obtaining estimates as to the cost of this issue. The Nursery needs to be looked at and updated as there may be a water issue in there as well, this cost could run \$5,000. Finally, there are some pressing items in need of repair at the Manse. The basement flooding has become severe, (cracked foundation and sewer back-up) and the garage needs to have the siding replaced. These costs are in excess of \$4,000. All told, there is approximately \$40,000 of repairs needed for the church facilities identified at this point.

While these are expenses that are going to occur with any facility (certainly given the age of the church and the manse), they are things that we don't normally budget for when developing the annual budget that is supported by our annual pledges. The Session approved the formation of an ad-hoc committee to help determine the best way to fund these expenses. This committee is comprised of chairs for the Building and Grounds and Stewardship Session committees, the Church Treasurer, the President of the Corporation, and the Pastor. This group has met once and is in the process of determining the extent and the costs of the repairs needed, but has already concluded that the best way to fund items is to have a special capital building pledge campaign. They will have their final recommendations ready for Session within about a month for their review and potential approval. The committee has discussed this special fund raising campaign, lasting two years, to raise the money needed to complete the repairs and updates.

We, of course, will keep you updated as we progress through these decisions, and will let you know the specifics of all items needed, the costs, and when and how the capital building campaign will be conducted.

We know these are difficult issues to deal with, and will require the support of all of us to accomplish. But we also know that we need to invest now to secure the future of our church facilities, so that we can continue our mission for the members of our church family and the community we serve, and ensure that our descendants can continue God's work in Milan through Peoples Presbyterian Church.



# Buildings and Grounds Report

By Jack Cranson, Buildings and Grounds Committee Chair



This past month, we had to replace a broken airline in the control panel for the air conditioning. (There was no a/c in the sanctuary.) Many thanks to Richard Brown for coming so quickly and completing that repair.

The Buildings and Grounds Committee have begun to repair damage caused by winter storms. These were covered by our insurance. We've had the two valley leaks repaired by both front doors, and replaced wood soffits with vinyl ones. New flashing was added to the chimney above the lounge fireplace. A broken eaves trough was repaired and the downspout was replaced.

**Photos of our beautiful Sanctuary! Thank you again to all those who assisted with set-up. We are so proud to belong here!**

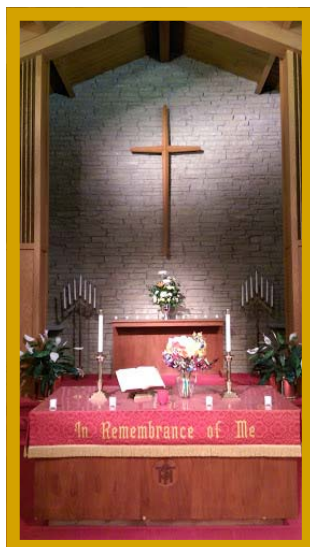
Photo Credits: Steve & Sue Barney and Rev. Kelly Shriver



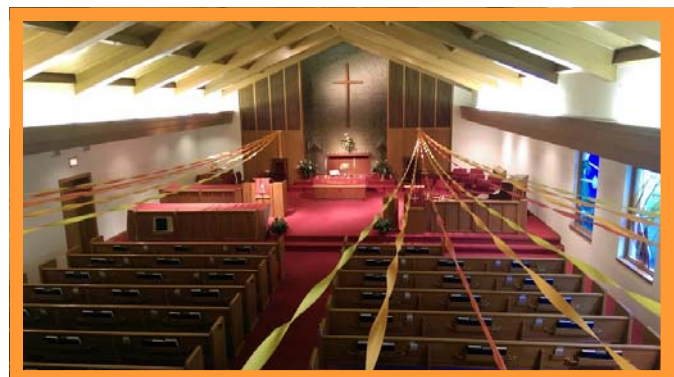
Community Good Friday, April 18



Easter Sunday, April 20




Day of Pentecost, June 8



# I ♥ VBS



# July 2014

| Sun  | Mon                       | Tue                                    | Wed  | Thu   | Fri   | Sat |
|--|---------------------------|--|--|---|---|-----|
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">                     July Fellowship Hour<br/>                     is hosted by:<br/>                     Worship and Music                 </div> |                           | 1                                      | 2<br>9 am<br>Bible Study   | 3   | 4<br><i>Independence Day</i><br>Church office<br>is closed. | 5   |
|  |                           | 6<br>10 am Worship: Communion,<br>C.E. | 7<br>6:45 pm<br>T.O.P.S.   | 8<br>7 pm<br>Worship and<br>Music<br>Committee<br>Meeting                             | 9   | 10  |
| 13<br>10 am Worship: Guest Pastor-<br>Rev. Lindsay Conrad,<br>Vacation Bible School<br>Kick-off, C.E.  | 14                        | 15                                     | <div style="background-color: yellow; padding: 2px;"> <b>Vacation Bible School at PPC!</b><br/>                     July 14-18, 6 pm-8 pm each evening<br/>                     See you here!                 </div> |   | 18  | 19  |
| 20<br>10 am Worship, C.E.  | 21<br>6:45 pm<br>T.O.P.S. | 22                                     | 23   | 24  | 25  | 26  |
| 27<br>10 am Worship: Guest Pastor-<br>Mike Beckman, C.E.   | 28<br>6:45 pm<br>T.O.P.S. | 29                                     | 30   |  |   |     |





# August 2014

| Sun  | Mon   | Tue   | Wed                                      | Thu  | Fri       | Sat       |
|--|---|---|--|--|-----------|-----------|
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">           August Fellowship Hour<br/>is hosted by: Deacons         </div>              |   |   |  |  | 1         | 2         |
| <b>3</b><br><br><b>10 am Worship: Guest Pastor-<br/>Rev. Kristin Riegel,<br/>Communion, C.E.</b><br><br><b>Potluck during fellowship.<br/>Everyone is welcome!</b> | <b>4</b><br><br>6:45 pm<br>T.O.P.S.   | <b>5</b>  | <b>6</b>                                 | <b>7</b>   | <b>8</b>  | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>10</b><br><br>8:45 am Deacons Meeting<br><br><b>10 am Worship, C.E.</b><br><br>Session Committee Monthly<br>Reports are due to Clerk.                           | <b>11</b><br><br>6:45 pm<br>T.O.P.S.  | <b>12</b><br><br>7 pm<br>Worship and<br>Music<br>Committee<br>Meeting | <b>13</b>                                | <b>14</b>  | <b>15</b> | <b>16</b> |
| <b>17</b><br><br><b>10 am Worship, C.E.</b><br><br>Session Committee Packets are<br>ready for pick-up.   | <b>18</b><br><br>6:45 pm<br>T.O.P.S.  | <b>19</b>   | <b>20</b><br><br>7 pm Session<br>Meeting | <b>21</b><br><br>3 pm<br>Calendar<br>Planning<br>Meeting   | <b>22</b> | <b>23</b> |
| <b>24</b><br><br><b>10 am Worship, C.E.</b><br><br>Church Mouse Newsletter articles<br>are due for the September Issue.  | <b>25</b><br><br>6:45 pm<br>T.O.P.S.  | <b>26</b>   | <b>27</b>                                | <b>28</b><br><br>9:30 am<br>Church Mouse<br>Newsletter<br>Collating.<br><br>10 am<br>Mission<br>Cluster<br>Meeting | <b>29</b> | <b>30</b> |
| <b>31</b><br><br><b>10 am Worship, No C.E.</b>   | <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div> <p>*<b>Christian Education kick-off</b> will be Sunday, September 7.</p> <p>*<b>Choir Practice</b> resumes September 7 at 9:00 am in the Music Room.</p> <p>*<b>PPC Hats for Cancer Project</b> will resume Thursday, September 18 at 1 pm in the Lounge.</p> </div> </div> |   |  |  |           |           |

# Peoples Presbyterian Church

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