



Synod Snaps

Weekly e-news from the Synod of Alaska-Northwest,
A judicatory of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

October 30, 2009

The Least of These

A reflection by the Rev. Joyce Martin Emery, Transitional Synod Executive

“And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you did it to me.’” -- Matthew 25:40

The last judgment, as described by Jesus in the gospel of Matthew, would infer that you and I will be judged by our actions here on earth when the Son of a Human Being comes in his glory. As descendants of the Protestant Reformers and students of this way of living, we have been taught to move among “the least of these.” We go to the hungry. We welcome the stranger. We visit the sick and clothe the naked. We visit the prisoner. We go because we expect to meet Jesus there. Do you see Jesus in the face of the hungry person? Have you found Jesus within the prison walls?

I must admit that maybe my motivation for service might be a bit askew. I want to see that people are fed so that no one goes hungry. Those that are sick often welcome someone who will share their misery, listen and pray. I just might be able to bring the love of Jesus to the prisoner. I am the “most” and must serve the “least.” “Hello, I’m here to bring you, the least, a bit of the most – me or my gifts.”

This article comes out of my being in some very needy places recently. I do not find any of the folk to be “the least of these,” rather I am finding each person to be a valued child of God who has a gift to share with me, the faith community and the world. There are people who are despised in our communities. What if Jesus has something to teach us through them? I just wonder if that is the attitude that Matthew 25 calls us to assume.

Summary of Synod Council Meeting October 27-28, 2009

The Synod Council has just completed three full days of meeting in the Seattle area. Monday the Synod Personnel committee met at the Synod office. Tuesday the Council meeting was held on the campus of [Seattle University](#) in Hunthausen Hall.

The Council was able to meet Dean Mark Markuly, Dean of the [School of Theology and Ministry](#), and the Rev. Jack Olive, Assistant Dean. The covenant "[Letter of Agreement](#)" was signed just after lunch. Elders Joan Merritt, Barbara Welsh, and the Rev. Dennie Carcelli were able to join the celebration as well. New ways of partnering were explored as the School of Theology and Ministry moves to create satellite educational offerings in Anchorage, Moses Lake, and with the Heritage University in Yakima.



Following is a summary of the events, discussions and decisions that were made during the Synod Council meeting. The Synod Council:

- Approved the Synod Assembly Minutes of July 2009.
- Approved the slate of Board Directors for the [Mission Development Certificate Program](#).
- Reviewed the evaluations of the Synod Assembly and noted that there was a great deal of support for meeting at Whitworth University again.



- Voted to support the work of the Communications Task Force and their financial requests to deepen the support for congregational website development, email, database, and other tech services.
- Voted to request the Higher Education Strategy Task Force to include questions about Native Education in each of their regional gatherings in 2010 across the Synod. Please learn what is going on and identify some of the needs.

The Council was able share dinner on Tuesday evening at [Exeter House](#), a Presbyterian retirement community located on 8th and Seneca near the University. Many Council members had never been to this beautiful building. Stories were shared about the [Presbyterian Retirement Communities Northwest \(PRCN\)](#), another of the Synod's Covenant partners.

The meeting resumed on Wednesday at the Synod office when the Council:

- Voted to approve a Vision 2010 document that will be sent immediately to the Synod Commissioners for their approval. The Vision was developed by the Council members out of the Vision 2004 document and the ongoing work that the Council has shared and observed over the last several years.
- Voted to accept the Financial Review for 2008. The review provides the documentation of the final joining of the Ecclesiastical and Corporate entities of the Synod after the incorporation of the [Mission Development Certificate Program](#).
- Welcomed General Presbyter the Rev. Lynn Longfield, and Olympia Presbytery Moderator the Rev. Barlow Buescher to hear a report on the status of the financial and spiritual health of Olympia Presbytery after a \$50,000 grant/loan was made to the Presbytery in the Spring of 2009.
- Voted to join the Mission Development Certificate Program in a one-year contract with the MissionInsight organization for a demographic tool to be used by the staff and our presbyteries and congregations.
- Voted to allocate funds to bring each of the seven presbyteries together for Disaster Preparedness training as soon as it can be arranged.
- Voted to embrace the ideas forwarded by the Leadership Task Force in its report and to ask the Leadership Task Force to work with the Council in implementing those ideas for the 2011 Assembly.
- Voted to concur with the Personnel Committees recommendation that based upon performance reviews, interviews and summaries of staff performance that a 3 % merit increase be given to each of the Synod's three full-time staff persons in 2010.
- Welcomed the opportunity to hear from the Rev. Rob McClure and Executive Director Dean Mielke about the new initiatives and the completed projects being implemented by our Covenant partner, the Mission Development Certificate Program.



In short, it was a productive meeting in which ideas were shared, hard work was accomplished and decisions were made that will change the way we do God's work, serve God's people, and "be" children of God in a changing world.



The Synod Council, October 2009

Front row, left to right: Rev. Curt Karns (EP representative), CLP Arne Stueckle (past moderator), J. Roger Lee (Moderator).

Middle row: Kathy Sandusky (INW), Pat Baer (SEA), Misty Jensen (YUK).

Back row: Rev. Rick Melin (Stated Clerk), Marjorie Freeman (PW), Rev. Stewart Congdon (NPS), Jim Irwin (Vice Moderator), Rev. Chuck Clarke (CW), John Brooks (OLY), Alma-jean Marion (Staff).

Not pictured: Rev. Joyce M. Emery (Staff), and Sarah Peniston (Staff).

Looking Ahead

November 6 Presbytery Moderators - EP/GP Consultation, Synod Office
November 11 Veteran's Day, Synod office closed
November 17 Seattle Presbytery meeting

Proverb of the Week

*Wisdom is at home in the mind of one who has understanding,
but it is not known in the heart of fools.*

Proverbs 14:33

Prayer for the Week

Father, Mother, God,
Thank you for your presence
during the hard and mean days.
For then we have you to lean upon.

Thank you for your presence
during the bright and sunny days,
for then we can share that which we have
with those who have less.

And thank you for your presence
during the Holy Days, for then we are able
to celebrate you and our families
and our friends.

For those who have no voice,
we ask you to speak.

For those who feel unworthy,
we ask you to pour your love out
in waterfalls of tenderness.

For those who live in pain,
we ask you to bathe them
in the river of your healing.

For those who are lonely, we ask
you to keep them company.

For those who are depressed,
we ask you to shower upon them]
the light of hope.

Dear Creator, You, the borderless
sea of substance, we ask you to give to all the
world that which we need most--Peace.

Maya Angelou

Links & Resources

Synod MDC Loan Program: www.synodmdc.org

Presbytery of Alaska: www.presbofak.org

Presbytery of Central Washington: www.cwpresby.org

Presbytery of the Inland Northwest: www.presbyinw.org

Presbytery of North Puget Sound: www.npspresbyterians.com

Presbytery of Olympia: www.olympres.org

Presbytery of Seattle: www.presbytery.org

Presbytery of Yukon: www.pbyukon.synodnw.org

Presbyterian Church (USA) www.pcusa.org

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance www.pcusa.org/pda

"God's grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love imperishable." - Ephesians 6:24 [NEB]

On behalf of the Synod Staff,

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