

Presbytery of Redstone eNews October 14, 2020



Let's Pray For

>>Community United Presbyterian Church,
New Alexandria, Leonard Morgan,
Commissioned Pastor
District 1

>>Congruity Presbyterian Church, New
Alexandria, Cliff Foster, Pastor
District 1

>>Sewickley United Presbyterian Church,
West Newton, Glenn Hart, Commissioned
Pastor
District 2

>>Pleasant View Presbyterian Church,
Smock, Laura Blank, Pastor
District 3

>>Tent Presbyterian Church, Uniontown,
Jeff Smith, Commissioned Pastor
District 3

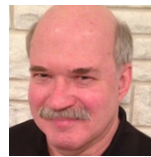
>>Revloc Presbyterian Church, David
O'Hara, Commissioned Pastor
District 4

>>Bolivar United Presbyterian Church,
James Sunseri, Commissioned Pastor
District 4

Contact Us

Rev. Skip Noftzger

7 points Jesus might make about the American election - Jim Farrer, Honorably Retired Pastor



Some pastors refrain from preaching on political topics. However, on national holidays and in national election years, many parishioners yearn for some biblical perspective.

First, we must establish Jesus' authority to speak to political issues.

One of the revitalized heresies is compartmentalizing life into areas where God supposedly should and should not be involved. This was the argument in [Matthew 22:15-22](#). On the surface Jesus' response seems to justify a separation of church (render to God) and state (render to Caesar).

But what is Jesus really saying?

According to Jacques Ellul in *The Subversion of Christianity* (p. 114) if the Caesars, some of whom claimed to be god, are owed obedience, loyalty and a percentage of wages, then the true and Most High God is owed so much more...everything!

Jesus in the Matthew passage above echoes Psalm 24 (the entire earth belongs to the LORD) and Paul in [Philippians 2:9](#) asserts that God has bestowed on Jesus the name/authority above all others. Therefore, Jesus as Lord claims the right not only to talk about any country, but also to demand allegiance.

Below are some other statements Jesus might post to America.

1. Your nation is not to become your God.

Most of us are proud of our nation, and pledging allegiance to something higher than our country sounds subversive. But the first commandment

Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk
[blog address](#)
[twitter address](#)

Bobbie Martin
 Administrative Assistant/
 Bookkeeper

Communicate the Word...

Carry on the Work...

Change the World...

Together

RESOURCES FOR CONGREGATIONS

[PCUSA list of resources](#)

<https://www.sba.gov>

<https://covid19.arcchurches.com/>

<https://www.vanderbloemen.com/blog/details-of-care-act>

<http://www.capincrouse.com>

PRESBYTERIAN FOUNDATION--ONLINE GIVING

Handouts are available through the Presbytery [website pages](#). To enroll or find out additional information, please refer to the [Presbyterian Foundation website](#).

Redstone Emergency Grants and Loans

IS YOUR CHURCH SUPPORTING A MINISTRY TO VULNERABLE PEOPLE THAT IS JEOPARDY OF NOT BEING SUSTAINED DURING THIS SEASON?

IS YOUR CHURCH DEVELOPING NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY (BEYOND JUST MOVING YOUR NORMAL MINISTRIES ONLINE) THAT YOU COULD

includes putting no other gods above the LORD. If any economic or political system were to conflict with the way of the LORD, it must be superseded and transformed.

2. God gives no automatic favorite-nation status.

Our Pilgrim fathers looked upon America as a place of destiny. Across the years the United States has surely played an important role in combating dangerous "isms." However, recall that the downfall of the nation of Israel always came when Israel began to believe it was chosen on merit to enjoy a privilege. Instead Israel was chosen by grace to carry out great responsibility: "I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth" ([Isaiah 49:6](#)).

3. You land is only loaned to you.

Jesus was fond of referring to the book of Deuteronomy, and he might remind us of chapter 8:11-20 where we are told not to be haughty, and say, "By our own power and might" we have gotten all we have. When we read to the end of the passage, we find: "If you do forget the LORD your God...you shall surely perish" (v.19).

4. It is okay to develop a fresh capacity for anger.

There are numerous examples in the Gospels describing Jesus' sarcasm and anger, just as there are lies and actions today that should simply outrage us. [Ephesians 4:26](#) reads: "Be angry, but do not sin." It is appropriate for us to have righteous indignation in the face of injustices. This should spur us toward reversing the situation, but our anger should not fester into hatred.

5. Don't assume America's "way" is always the best.

The infant mortality rate has been lower in Nepal than in cities such as Pittsburgh and Washington, DC. A worker in the United States is 36 times more likely to be killed on the job than a worker in Sweden. In Canada in 2012, the leading candidate for Prime Minister spent only \$236,000. Yet, more than six billion dollars is spent on the American presidential election process.

6. Don't expect your future to go smoothly.

It is a puzzle to many why Jesus, with a gospel of forgiveness and love, should have stirred up such bitter hatred among the most religious and virtuous people in his nation. But in [Matthew 10:34](#) Jesus warned his followers that he came to bring not peace...but a sword. He is always on the cutting edge!

The Kingdom Rule of God will eventually overthrow any and all old orders in which self, not the Savior, is sovereign.

USE SEED MONEY FOR ASSISTANCE?

IS YOUR CHURCH STRUGGLING WITH CASH FLOW DIRECTLY RESULTING FROM ABSTAINING FROM IN-PERSON WORSHIP?

As we continue this need to adapt to doing ministry and mission during this season of change, many congregations may be wrestling with not only rapid changes in worship services and ministry programs, but also in the mission initiatives of the congregation. In this COVID-19 pandemic, we are required AND have the opportunity to serve God in faithfulness in new ways. As a Presbytery, we recognize that some of these transitions to different ways of doing ministry are not without costs during this period of virtual worship and potential drop offs in regular support.

Consequently, the Presbytery of Redstone will offer short term grant and loan programs in order to aid congregations without sufficient reserves to make some of these transitions in ministry. [Click here](#) for more information.

Redstone Pastor Information

[Weekly Zoom Pastor Check-In](#) Wednesdays at NOON - virtual food and fellowship

[Redstone Pastors Facebook Group](#)

COVID-19 RESOURCES AND HELPFUL LINKS

>>[PCUSA Resources](#) for churches and individuals
 >>From our Synod of the Trinity a variety of [helpful resources](#)
 >>Helpful links & resources from the PCUSA [Church Store](#)
 >>From the [Board of Pensions](#)
 >>COVID-19: [100 Ideas for Ministers and Ministries Leaders](#)

7. You haven't seen anything yet.

American has lots of resources and perhaps still more opportunities, yet the Bible looks ahead to the new earth that Jesus will usher in. 1 [Corinthians 2:9](#) proclaims the promise first given in [Isaiah 64:4](#) that no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor heart imagined, what has been prepared for those who love the Most High God.

The best future for the United States is not the agenda of the elephant nor of the donkey but that of the Lamb...of God.

Installation Service

The Rev. Dawn Sherwood will be installed as the Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Jeannette on Sunday, October 18, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. **MASKS ARE EXPECTED** to be worn during this service. We welcome Dawn to Redstone Presbytery!

PTS Offers "Hope and Healing: Mental Health First Aid Training"

Interested Teaching Elders and Commissioned Pastors will need to register if you are interested in joining this training. Registration information is listed below.



Oct. 30 and Nov. 13, 2020, 9:00 - 11:45 a.m.
 Nov. 13, 2020, 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Where is the training?

The meetings will all be online via Zoom. Our office will send links before each session.

Who is the training for?

Christian leaders of rural congregations from Southwest PA, Southeast Ohio, and West Virginia.

What is it?

It is a three-part online series intended to empower rural faith leaders with the knowledge, practices, and grounding they need to respond with grace and effectiveness to mental health concerns and to build viable, strong support systems to advance this work in their churches.

What is the structure of the program?

One day/week for three weeks. Social workers with expertise in faith-based

>>[Six Strategies for Shepherding the Flock While 'Socially Distanced'](#)

Anti-Racism Resources

The PCUSA Store is offering a useful list of Anti-Racism Resources for our congregations. Please find them by [clicking here](#).

Matthew 25 Initiative



NEARLY 500 PC(USA) CONGREGATIONS have accepted the exciting and bold invitation to become "a Matthew 25 church." Look for ideas and opportunities that your church too can join our Matthew 25 Initiative. See the worship and ministry resources by [clicking here](#).

Seeking the Beloved Community - Synod Online Offering

Beginning on September 27; 7:00 p.m., the Synod began offering a series of presentations of how we might consider our present issues and concerns in light of the "Beloved Community" promoted by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In the first session (9/27), Rev. Dr. James Calvin Davis, professor at Middlebury College, author of several books including most recently, *Forbearance* (and formerly of Redstone Presbytery) will help us to consider the characteristics of the "Beloved Community." For more information - [click here](#). Presentation will be by Zoom and will be recorded for later viewing as well.

If you were unable to attend the 9/27 session (or would like to review it), below is a link to the recording that has been posted on the Synod's YouTube channel. Also, you are welcome and urged to share this link with anyone who you think might benefit from this conversation.

mental therapy will lead the two short sessions; certified professionals will lead the full-day session.

What will the program do?

>The program's presenters will instruct participants on:
 >How to differentiate spiritual care from mental health and clarify what faith leaders are equipped to provide;
 >The theological rationale for why the church's mission includes understanding care for those with mental illness;
 >Becoming familiar and developing relationships with local mental health resources; and
 >Learning the triage basics offered through Mental Health First Aid, a skills-based course that teaches participants about mental health and substance-use issues.

Why should I take part in the training?

>To obtain a better understanding of providing spiritual care and referring those with mental illness to other resources.
 >To help end the stigma often associated with mental illness in faith communities, thereby helping your church to extend hospitality to those who are ill and their loved ones.

After the training is completed, what next?

Short term: We plan to have a follow-up celebration with all participants in May 2021 - Mental Health Awareness Month - to share our stories of success, projects, and best practices.

Long term: This program is supported by a PC(USA) grant and is a pilot project for extending mental health training to faith leaders throughout the denomination.

How do I register?

Visit www.pts.edu/hope-and-healing-2021 for the link to the registration form. After we review your submitted form, we will email you regarding your participation in the program.

Who can I talk to if I have questions?

Call the Office of Continuing Education at 412-924-1345 or email ConEd@pts.edu.

IPLF Fall Workshops

The Inter-Presbytery Leadership Formation, a joint ministry of Redstone, Washington, Upper Ohio Valley, Kiskiminetas, and Pittsburgh Presbyteries,

Link: <https://youtu.be/jT1K3jFLC6Y>

Reminder that this series will continue into October and November, with details and registration available on the Synod's website here:

<https://www.syntrinity.org/synod/beloved-community-conversations/>

- Oct. 18: Pandemic (Laurie Kraus)
- Oct. 25: Hyperpartisanship (John Welch)
- Nov. 8: Technology (Bruce Reyes-Chow)
- Nov. 15: Racism and White Privilege (tentative)

Thank you again for your interest in this conversation and we hope to see you again soon!

Tax Exemption Certificates Update

The State is well behind in getting all the certificates renewed. The State extended the deadline of existing certificates until December 31st. Attached is a document that churches can use until the certificate is received.

**2020
Tax Exemption
Renewal**

The State has been sending the Synod some of the certificates which they are then forwarding to the churches. You may contact the Business Administrator at the Synod office directly to see if your certificate came in.

PTS Offering Online Classes and Events



Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is offering a schedule of continuing education classes and events this fall and winter. Offerings include: *Claiming Pentecost: New Beginnings in a Post-Pandemic Church*; *Wise Women and*

Spirituality; and *Spiritual Writing*. For more information go to <https://www.pts.edu/chronological-schedule>



will be offering the following workshops this fall:

Ethics and Boundaries - Michelle Snyder, Crow's Feet Consulting, Instructor - November 14, 2020

Pastoral Care - Rev. Marnie Silbert, HR Redstone Presbytery, Instructor - December 12, 2020

All workshops are FREE and will be offered from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. at the Redstone Presbytery office, 1004 Mt. Pleasant Road, Greensburg, PA 15601, and/or via Zoom videoconferencing

Please RSVP to [Bobbie](#) at Redstone Presbytery and let her know the workshop(s) you are interested in attending.

Synod of the Trinity Offers Grant

The past few months have presented new needs, new missional opportunities and new relationships. Have you been challenged in new ways to partner with other denominations to live out the love of Christ in your community? Has a local ministry need emerged or been pondered during these COVID impacted times? There may be grant support available to you to carry out this important work. The Ecumenical Grant is a one-time grant of up to \$2,000 and the application deadline is November 1. For more information [click here](#).



PTS World Mission Initiative Conference



THERE'S STILL TIME to register yourself and your discussion group for JESUS CHRIST AND THE DIVIDING WALL: RACE AND GOD'S MISSION. Excellent help to get started (or make progress) discussing inter-racial tensions, justice, and Christian responsibility.

<https://www.pts.edu/wmi-conference>

Board of Pensions Expands Assistance Program

Access to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions will be expanding effective January 1, 2021 - which means more members of the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) may be eligible to receive important financial support. Through the Assistance Program, the Board of Pensions provides need-based grants to help active and retired members and their families. The program is one of the ways in which the Board promotes the health and wholeness of its members.



Advent Sunday School Options

IT'S NOT TOO EARLY - to ask yourself how you'll present Advent Sunday School lessons if the authorities send us into COVID shut-down again. Or perhaps you are already planning to offer an online alternative as part of your CE programming. The Presbyterian Outlook now has Advent devotions ready for pre-order, with adult education resources - for virtual learning - coming available soon too! Find helps at pres-outlook.org. IN ADDITION - You can access the PC(USA) Advent Resource Guide [here](#).



New Online Resource for Pastors



Samaritan Counseling is offering a new resource for pastors, online Worship for Pastors (www.congregationforclergy.org).

Beginning this week, they are offering weekly, 35-40 minute worship services designed specifically for the challenges pastors face in a changing world. Pastors rarely have the opportunity worship in services focusing entirely on their issues. The services offer themes, scripture, prayer, music, and sermons formed with pastors in mind, with the hope that pastors will use these services as part of a weekly discipline helping them lead churches in really difficult times.

The services can be found at www.congregationforclergy.org. The worship is led by an expanding team of pastors and church leaders from different denominations who's vocations are devoted to helping pastors and churches engage in healthy ministry and mission.



Presbytery of Redstone | 1004 Mt. Pleasant Road | Greensburg | PA | 15601