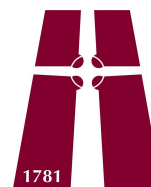


Presbytery of Redstone eNews

January 21, 2021



Please pray for...

District 1 Churches

>>Puckety Presbyterian Church, Lower Burrell, Brian Kilbert, Pastor

>>First Presbyterian Church, Murrysville, Ed Gray, Pastor

District 2 Churches

>>Derry Presbyterian Church, Marnie Abraham Russell, Covenant Pastor

>>First Presbyterian Church, Greensburg, Martin Ankrum, Pastor

District 3 Churches

>>First Presbyterian Church, Fayette City, Aleda Menchyk Moderator

>>Little Redstone Presbyterian Church, Fayette City, Josh Scully, Commissioned Pastor

District 4 Churches

>>First Presbyterian Church, Ebensburg, Owar Ojulu, Pastor

>>Bethany Presbyterian Church, Johnstown, Denise Todero, Commissioned Pastor

Reflections from ... Skip Noftzger, Executive Presbyter



"A Different Call for Unity"

Given the events of this season, whether pandemic frustration, racial unrest, or civic conflict, existing differences in our churches and in our society play out in polarized fashion, where those who differ or disagree too easily fall into the trap of demonizing the other "side." The resulting implications can "take us to the brink" sometimes becoming scary and force us to retreat from some of the lived out implications of such polarization. Voices emerge, including our own, that call out for unity. Having come to the brink of such thinking, many are attempting to pull it back in rhetoric and action. No doubt, unity is needed, but how and on what foundation?

Certainly, the ways that we have engaged each other for a number of years (not just since the advent of Twitter) have only coarsened the discourse in our lives and in the larger society. Consequently, any call for unity may be a welcome admonition, yet, it will require more than just public calls alone. In fact, unity will not be achieved either by ignoring difference that is not grounded in an appeal to the greater and common good. Neither will it even be possible without some demonstrated humility in both our convictions and our actions, but it cannot be used as an instrument to merely protect the status quo if it perpetuates sin or acknowledgement of honest conviction, nor can it be grounded in any status quo that would protect sin or delay or deny the pursuit of the justice and righteousness of God's kingdom.

Just a few days ago, we remembered the legacy and impact of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Often, on that day, we hear once more the "I Have a Dream" speech. Yet, on this week, I thought more of the "Letter from the Birmingham Jail." That famous letter was a response to

a public statement issued by eight Alabama clergymen entitled, "A Call for Unity." That "unity" was grounded in a desire not to demonstrate and a willingness to wait for court actions to bring about changes where rights were denied.

In response, Dr. King noted his connection with existing groups. And, he was there because injustice was there. Like the prophets and the Apostle, he also was "compelled to carry the gospel of freedom" beyond his own community. In his words, *"injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly."*

The efforts of Dr. King and others were not to settle for an artificial "unity." In that type of "unity," it becomes more than a willingness to tolerate differences of tactics. It can betray a passivity (in the name of unity) concerning principles, even with those that deny human dignity, sometimes in the form of delay. Yet, the unity to which we are called not only transcends differences of personality or perspective but seeks it based upon redemptive mission of God's kingdom, which brings grace, love and justice, not just to us as individuals, but to the world. In this way, it is incumbent upon the Church of Jesus Christ to both model such unity for others and to participate in the building that type of unity in our communities and in our world.

January Presbytery Meeting

The January 26, 2021 Presbytery gathering will be conducted via ZOOM, beginning @ 6:00 p.m. The packet and appendices are now available from the Presbytery website (www.redstonepresbytery.org). Please let Bobbie (secretary@redstonepresbytery.org) know who will be attending from your church so login information can be sent to them.



The Inter-Presbytery Leadership Formation, a joint ministry of Redstone, Washington, Upper Ohio Valley, Kiskiminetas, and Pittsburgh Presbyteries, are again offering workshops this spring. Workshops include:

- February 20, 2021 - Stewardship All Year 'Round - Rev. Dr. Dan Hans, Instructor
- March 20, 2021 - Vitality No Matter the Size: Small Church Health and Wellness - Rev. Lee McDermott, Instructor
- April 17, 2021 - Creative and Faithful Celebrations of the Sacraments - Rev. Laura Blank, Instructor
- May 15, 2021 - Shared Leadership in Ordered Ministries: Ruling Elders and Teaching Elders, and How We Lead Together - Meg Steele and Rev. Jason Hefner, Instructors

These workshops are FREE and will be offered from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. They are offered via Zoom video conferencing and may be available as in-person workshops as well. Please RSVP to [Bobbie](#) at Redstone Presbytery and let her know if you are interested in attending any or all of these workshops.

After the events a couple of weeks ago in our nation, the First Presbyterian Church of Jeannette responded by opening their facility for anyone who wanted to drop in throughout the next day just to pray. People came and went throughout the day with Rev. Dawn Sherwood providing leadership in their opportunity to pray. As a result of the impact of this spontaneous and open-ended event, the church has decided to continue with weekly prayer and is inviting other congregations in Redstone Presbytery to join in at the same time (see announcement below)

First Presbyterian Church of Jeannette is continuing prayer for our nation, opening the church and Facebook Live at 11:00 AM Thursdays. We invite you and your churches to pray at the same time, as a gesture of unity as we all pray at the same time for the Light of the world to guide us in bringing justice, reconciliation and peace to our nation.

Please consider how your congregation might commit and join in collective petitions throughout our Presbytery for God's light to break forth.



Rev. John Morrow, Honorably Retired Member of Redstone Presbytery, has published a book. The title is 'Aishling' which in Gaelic/Irish means 'dream or fantasy.' The theme is racial justice and equity, the setting is 1960's Mississippi as seen through the eyes and activities of two young girls, one white, one black, who are first drawn together in exploring an ante-bellum mansion. The book is published by Christian Faith Publishing and is available on Amazon and Barnes and Noble.

Terms of Call 2021 / Commissioned Pastor Contract

The Committee on Ministry requires that each church submit a yearly Terms of Call form for the Pastor serving that church. If you have not already done so, please submit the 2021 Terms of Call form for your pastor as soon as it has been approved by your Session. You may download a copy of the form by [clicking here](#).

Also, if a Commissioned Pastor is currently serving your church, and their current contract is expiring this year, a renewal contract will need to be submitted as well. You may download a copy of that form by [clicking here](#). If you are unsure if the contract for your Commissioned Pastor is due to expire, you may call the Presbytery office.

Redstone Pastor Information

Weekly Zoom Pastor Check-In

Wednesdays at NOON - virtual food and fellowship

Redstone Pastors Facebook Group

Click the link below to view the video from Christian Associates for the Week of Prayer. <https://www.casp.org>

REMINDER!! The Annual Statistical Report for 2020 will be due online at <https://oga.pcusa.org/stats> by February 14, 2021. You will need a user name and password to file this report and it will need to be approved by your session prior to submitting it. If you are unsure of what your user name and password is please call me and I can provide it to you.

You will also need to have the various annual reports, (2021 Terms of Call, Manse Inspection Report, and List of Session Members by Class) required by the Presbytery, submitted by March 31, 2021. You may file most of these reports online at <http://redstonepresbytery.org/clerk-of-session-annual-report> if that is easier for you. This does not require any type of login information.

Although you can submit your membership numbers with the Presbytery form, that does not fulfill the requirement of the complete annual statistical report at the General Assembly. You will still need to file the complete annual report to the Office of the General Assembly at the web address listed above.

If you have any questions or need assistance with any of these filings, please do not hesitate to contact Skip or me. We would be more than happy to help you.



Ruling Elder training resources

- "Coming Alive in Christ" - new training based upon constitutional questions (equip.pcusa.org) You will need to create a login to enroll.
- Preparation for Ordered Ministry -Theoacademy Videos (<http://www.theoacademy.com/lessons-for-ruling-elders-and-deacons>)

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 you church too can join our Matthew 25 Initiative. See the worship and ministry resources by [clicking here](#).



Presbytery Staff

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*Communicate the
Word...*

Carry on the Work...

Change the World...

Together

Presbytery of Redstone

www.redstonepresbytery.org

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