

# ThE Scribe

JULY 27, 2011

As of this month, I am no longer the Minister of Word and Sacrament I once was.

On July 10, a new form of government for Presbyterians took effect. From now on I'm officially a 'teaching elder'. Elders voted to office by congregations are now known officially as 'ruling elders'. For those of us who have emphasized these terms over the years, this is a welcome change; it affirms our distinctive Presbyterian understanding that elders and ministers are equal partners in leadership.

I loved our old form of government, embodied in our Book of Order. It's really two books of order rolled into one; when the Northern and Southern Presbyterian churches, divided since the civil war, officially reunited in 1983, they merged their forms of government. That's the document I have lived with and studied and been guided by all my adult life, and it contains the work of many faithful, thoughtful, passionate Presbyterians over the course of generations.

But there's no denying that the Book of Order had become somewhat unwieldy over the years (that's a kind way of saying 'lengthy', and a very kind way of saying 'bloated and fat'). An even stronger impetus for change may have been the worry that its growing size was a reflection of a growing legalism. And unchecked legalism, of course, can lead to all sorts of ills: inflexibility of mind and heart, bureaucracy for its own sake, and a 'one-size-fits-all' understanding of what it means to be a church, to name but a few.

The new form of government is an attempt to considerably slim down and tone up the old one. A guiding principle in its development has been to maintain certain basic principles and understandings (albeit in more concise, focused language) while allowing and encouraging a great deal of flexibility and latitude in how these principles and understandings are lived out in presbyteries and particular churches.

A group of denominational leaders released a statement to accompany the new Form of Government. Among other things, they said, "While the new Form of Government will help the PCUSA to be a faithful and responsive church in the 21st century, it also has a dimension of bringing us back to a truly constitutional document that contains broad governing and theological principles and emphasizes function over structure."

The letter also says, "Many Presbyterians will see nothing suddenly or dramatically different with a new Form of Government. Worship services will go on as usual, and congregations will continue to teach the faith, serve their communities, reach out to those in need, and work to further God's realm on earth. However, what will be different is that congregations, presbyteries, and synods will have the opportunity to tailor mission and ministry to fit their own particular contexts and challenges."

Over the coming year, the presbytery and all Presbyterian churches, including our own, will be working (as required) to do some of that tailoring. The session will keep you posted as we progress. Gratifyingly, the timing of this task works to our benefit, as we embark on new ways of being the true church in and to our community.

The new document is refreshingly brief and clear. Briefly and clearly, then, here are some important excerpts that I challenge us all to study, ponder, and act upon. Prayerfully consider how the wisdom in these words might help us, and free us, and encourage us in our new ministries of outreach.

We'll have copies of the new document available in our office and on our website as soon as they become available.

## G-1.0101 THE MISSION OF THE CONGREGATION

The congregation is the church engaged in the mission of God in its particular context. The triune God gives to the congregation all the gifts of the gospel necessary to being the Church. The congregation is the basic form of the church, but it is not of itself a sufficient form of the church. Thus congregations are bound together in communion with one another, united in relationships of accountability and responsibility, contributing their strengths to the benefit of the whole, and are called, collectively, the church.

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Through the congregation God's people carry out the ministries of proclamation, sharing the Sacraments, and living in covenant life with God and each other. In the life of the congregation, individual believers are

equipped for the ministry of witness to the love and grace of God in and for the world. The congregation reaches out to people, communities, and the world to share the good news of Jesus Christ, to gather for worship, to offer care and nurture to God's children, to speak for social justice and righteousness, to bear witness to the truth and to the reign of God that is coming into the world.

Membership in the Church of Jesus Christ is a joy and a privilege. It is also a commitment to participate in Christ's mission. A faithful member bears witness to God's love and grace and promises to be involved responsibly in the ministry of Christ's Church. Such involvement includes:

- proclaiming the good news in word and deed,
- taking part in the common life and worship of a congregation,
- lifting one another up in prayer, mutual concern, and active support,
- studying Scripture and the issues of Christian faith and life,
- supporting the ministry of the church through the giving of money, time, and talents,
- demonstrating a new quality of life within and through the church,
- responding to God's activity in the world through service to others,
- living responsibly in the personal, family, vocational, political, cultural, and social relationships of life,
- working in the world for peace, justice, freedom, and human fulfillment,
- participating in the governing responsibilities of the church, and
- reviewing and evaluating regularly the integrity of one's membership, and considering ways in which one's participation in the worship and service of the church may be increased and made more meaningful.

#### G-2.0101 CHRIST'S MINISTRY

The Church's ministry is a gift from Jesus Christ to the whole Church. Christ alone rules, calls, teaches, and uses the Church as he wills, exercising his authority by the ministry of women and men for the establishment and extension of God's new creation. Christ's ministry is the foundation and standard for all ministry, the pattern of the one who came "not to be served but to serve" (Matthew 20:28). The basic form of ministry is the ministry of the whole people of God, from whose midst some are called to ordered ministries, to fulfill particular functions. Members and those in ordered ministries serve together under the mandate of Christ.

#### G-2.0201 DEACON DEFINED

Note: Like many churches of our size, at Thalia Trinity we have combined the offices of deacon and ruling elder into one.

The ministry of deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of compassion, witness, and service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies or structures, or anyone in distress. Persons of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly and sisterly love, sincere compassion, and sound judgment should be chosen for this ministry.

#### G-2.0301 RULING ELDER DEFINED

As there were in Old Testament times elders for the government of the people, so the New Testament church provided persons with particular gifts to share in discernment of God's Spirit and governance of God's people. Accordingly, congregations should elect persons of wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit. Ruling elders are so named not because they "lord it over" the congregation (Matthew 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life.

Ruling elders, together with teaching elders, exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church, including ecumenical relationships. When elected by the congregation, they shall serve faithfully as members of the

session. When elected as commissioners to higher councils, ruling elders participate and vote with the same authority as teaching elders, and they are eligible for any office.

#### G-2.0501 TEACHING ELDER DEFINED

Teaching elders (also called ministers of the Word and Sacrament) shall in all things be committed to teaching the faith and equipping the saints for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:12). They may serve in a variety of ministries, as authorized by the presbytery. When they serve as preachers and teachers of the Word, they shall preach and teach the faith of the church, so that the people are shaped by the pattern of the gospel and strengthened for witness and service. When they serve at font and table, they shall interpret the mysteries of grace and lift the people's vision toward the hope of God's new creation. When they serve as pastors, they shall support the people in the disciplines of the faith amid the struggles of daily life. When they serve as presbyters, they shall participate in the responsibilities of governance, seeking always to discern the mind of Christ and to build up Christ's body through devotion, debate, and decision.

There are many other things to like in this new form of government, but I close with an essential point that under girds Presbyterian polity yesterday, today, and tomorrow:

#### G-1.0102 THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CONGREGATION

The polity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) presupposes the fellowship of women, men, and children united in covenant relationship with one another and with God through Jesus Christ. The organization rests on the fellowship and is not designed to work without trust and love.

In Christ,

Richard

### August 2011



#### Birthdays

1 – Iris Scott	5 – Lili Robichaud	8 – Sarah Gibson	8 – Louise McNeill
13 – Johanna VanArsdale	14 – Jacob Gibson	14 – Joshua Gibson	14 – Susan Scott
15 – Caroline Wilhoit	18 – Stephen Scholefield		20 – Beverly Richardson
20 – Ann Zuidema	22 – John McKay	25 – Connie Bradford	28 – Jeff Black
28 – Kay Sawyer	28 – Carol Womack	30 – Becky Bushnell	

#### Anniversaries

August 2 – Sandy & Lee Lively  
August 3 – Lynne & Bruce MacCall  
August 6 – Nadia & Jules Robichaud  
August 13 – Charlene & John McKay – 45<sup>th</sup>  
August 18 – Susan & Jon Hagadorn  
August 21 – Carol & Wayne Wright  
August 26 – Joan & David Scholefield – 45<sup>th</sup>  
August 27 – Fay & Tim Green

## Volunteers for the Month of August 2011

## **Sunday, August 7**

Greeters – Cindy Black; Ushers – Jules Robichaud & Tim Gibson; Acolyte – Stephen Scholefield; Worship Class – Carol Matthews; Counters – Cindy Black & Mary Lee Duncan; Fellowship Hosts – \_\_\_\_\_.

## **Sunday, August 14**

Greeter – Tim Gibson; Ushers – George VanArsdale & Jules Robichaud; Acolyte – William Goodman; Worship Class – Carol Matthews; Counters – David Scholefield & Tim Gibson; Fellowship Hosts – The Bushnells.

## **Sunday, August 21**

Greeters – Sue Harper; Ushers – George VanArsdale & Tim Gibson; Acolyte – Jake Gibson; Worship Class – Carol Matthews; Counters – Jules Robichaud & Anne May; Fellowship Hosts – The Munsons.

## **Sunday, August 28**

Greeters – Carol Wright; Ushers – George VanArsdale & Scott Wilhoit; Acolyte – Lili Robichaud; Worship Class – Carol Matthews; Counters – Cindy Black & Mary Lee Duncan; Fellowship Hosts – \_\_\_\_\_.

## **Lost and Found**

**Our Lost & Found box is overflowing, and we also have items that have been “hanging” around for many moons. We’re going to put all these items out in the Fellowship Hall, probably on the table in front of the Missions bulletin board. They’ll be out there starting the weekend of July 30-31 and will remain for 2 weekends after that. Any items not claimed by August 15<sup>th</sup> will be donated to the CHKD store or to the Goodwill store. Please, please, please check out these items. You may not recall that you lost something and be surprised to see it there! We find all kinds of things on a weekly basis. (Umbrellas and eyeglasses are the favorites.)**

**A man’s ring was found in the sanctuary awhile ago. If you have lost one, please call Diane and describe it to her. We would love to reunite the ring with its owner!!!!**

## **Session Reports**



### **Called Session Meeting July 14, 2001**

- A short called meeting was held to review the financial reports and packet of all information that would be presented at the Congregational Meeting on July 17<sup>th</sup>.
- It was decided that Jon Hagadorn would present the outreach plans to the congregation.

### **Stated Session Meeting July 19, 2001**

- ☼ Work has begun on a new website; brochure samples will soon be able to be examined; and work is being done with the city towards the goal of having signs put up on Virginia Beach Boulevard near its intersection with Thalia Road.
- ☼ A discussion was held to come up with ways in which we could assist military families in the area.
- ☼ We will continue to regularly inform the congregation on steps being taken towards the goals presented at the Congregational Meeting.
- ☼ A special event will be scheduled on a Friday or Saturday evening in October, which will be open to the community. Further information to be provided as plans are confirmed.
- ☼ Nadia will address the subject of adult Christian Education in her newsletter article this month.
- ☼ Joan Scholefield (Chair) and Pam Ponce were elected as the Session members of the Nominations Committee. This committee will plan to meet soon to begin their work towards filling openings on Session for 2012.

## **Committee Information**

### **Hospitality & Fellowship**



**Men's Breakfast** ... the kind where the men cook it but everyone is welcome to partake ... will be at **9:00 a.m.** on Sunday, August 7<sup>th</sup>. [The **MEN'S** "Men's Breakfast" will be at 8:00 a.m.]

## Christian Education & Nurture

*Hello to everybody!* I hope this edition of *The Scribe* finds you enjoying the summer and the delightful weather we've had these past few days! As we unwind during the dog days of summer, the Christian Education Committee is looking ahead and planning for the upcoming fall/school season.

The whole congregation is invited to get involved with the **HIVE**. The goal again this year is to have enough teachers (and kitchen volunteers) available so that we can establish a rotation. Please share your thoughts, comments and suggestions; we are grateful for all input we receive from the best congregation of volunteers in all of Tidewater. Come join us to Help Inspire Values Everlasting! We will meet 14 times in the Fall, beginning on September 11<sup>th</sup>, and 13 times in the Winter/Spring going from January 8<sup>th</sup> through April 1<sup>st</sup>.

Plans are being made to renew the **Adult Christian Education** at our church, and we need to know what's interesting to you. I ask you, brothers and sisters, what do **YOU** want, and need, to further your spiritual growth? How can the church serve you? You can help us develop Christian Education as well ... help us select topics and programs ... help us organize Christian Education events ... and help us spread the word!!!

Please give comments and suggestions on the type of CE programs you would like to see at TTPC. Contact [nadia.robichaud@cox.net](mailto:nadia.robichaud@cox.net) or leave a message in the Christian Education mailbox in the church office. Help us make our congregation a spiritually thriving community.

-Nadia

Ho hum ... another long, boring pre-September church planning meeting ... NOT!!

Talk about watching a tennis match! My head was bobbing back and forth like a bobblehead figure in the back of a NYC taxicab! That's how fast the ideas were coming at the HIVE planning meeting, and everything got done ... well, just about ... seems there's a little shortage ... and that's where you come in ....



HIVE needs volunteers to float, just like a bee, in the classrooms (no teaching), the kitchen and anywhere else you can be of assistance doing whatever you can, whenever you can. Please call Nadia at 473-1994 to sign up for the 2<sup>nd</sup> exciting year of HIVE.

On behalf of Team HIVE a BIG, HONEY of a THANK YOU !!

## Library

This month's book review: Space for God, the Study and Practice of Prayer and Spirituality by Don Posterna.

This is an amazing book, and meant to be used to teach us to listen to God's voice through a spread of writings, meditations, quotations, and art works. Also, journaling is an important part of the process as you go through the exercises. I have been journaling every day for about 30 years, and if these exercises get you started on journaling, that alone will add a new dimension to your life.

Take this book a little at a time, or do what you can in order to enjoy and learn from it, so you won't be burdened by its enormous scope.

Connie Bradford

## Missions & Social Action

### Early Childhood School



The Early Childhood School is going through a transition phase as we look forward to some new staff members and welcome new students in the fall. Our school is sad to have Miriam Callahan retire after thirty dedicated years of educating our children. She truly has been a blessing to our school and the community. Her retirement celebration was a great deal of fun and the school appreciated all those involved in making it a huge success.

Change brings the opportunity to create a new look and have new ideas for the school. Cathy Graham has been hired as the teacher for the three year-old class. She comes with a great deal of experience and enthusiasm. Donna Wilhoit will be our new music teacher and she has been planning some wonderful lessons. She has already been putting together some creative ideas for the End of the Year Program.

We are also pleased to have Sue Miller (4 year-old teacher) and Chrissy Vacca (assistant teacher) returning in the fall. Marion Mitchell will remain as the director and she will also be the assistant in the three year-old classroom.

The school would like to give a special thank you to the youth group and their leader, Heather, for working so hard this summer on making our building inviting. Earlier this summer they raked pine straw and mulched the beds and placed rocks around the new sidewalk. They also painted the garage doors. The biggest project was painting the three year-old classroom. After two long mornings at Bible school, the youth worked diligently and did a wonderful job painting the classroom. We also appreciate the help and guidance of Cindy Forbes and Nadia Robichaud. We had fun, food, and fellowship and got the job done too. So again I thank everyone who was involved!

We still have some three-year-old openings, so please help us get the word out to the community!

Marion Mitchell, Director

## **Administration, Finance & Stewardship**

**The deadline for the next newsletter's articles and for the September calendar is 9 a.m. on Friday, August 26<sup>th</sup>. If you can help assemble the newsletter for mailing, please let Diane know. It will ready at 2:00 on Tuesday afternoon, the 30<sup>th</sup>.**

## **Communications**

Thalia Trinity is now on Facebook! Join us and be our "friend."

### **Team Mail-Out:**

WOW! Thanks to all of you who have already signed up for Team Mail-Out --- it was quite a positive response! Jon Hagadorn has assured us that there will be plenty of work for all to keep busy. So, if you have not had the chance to respond to the follow-up call, it's not too late.

In Christ's Love,  
Lynn Huffman



### **Letters and other info:**

To the congregation:

I want to thank each of you for all your cards and kind words regarding my retirement from teaching at our church pre-school. The reception the School Board gave me following church on June 12<sup>th</sup> was the perfect ending to a career that was so fulfilling and enjoyable. My heart swells each time I think of those four pews filled with alumni that came forward for the children's sermon that Sunday. Many of you have commented on how moved you were also. That truly is a memory that will last me a lifetime.

Over my 30 years of working at the pre-school, I was blessed to have been the "first teacher" to over 500 children. Our church has been equally blessed and should be so proud that the doors of the church have opened for the young minds of so many beginning their educational journey in a Christian atmosphere. Your support has made all of this possible.

Thank you again ... it's been a great ride!

Miriam Callahan

To the Thalia Trinity family,

Thank you so much for holding our nephew, Joel Wright, in your prayers after he was wounded. He is recovering extremely well.

Gretchen & Stephen Benda

**FROM PEVA:**

The Network of Biblical Storytellers, International will hold its annual festival gathering: "How Many Times? Stories of Forgiveness" on August 10-13 at the Ridgecrest Conference Center near Asheville, NC. This ecumenical group comprises United Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Disciples, UCC, Mennonites, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Roman Catholics and many other denominations. For info and registration go to [www.nbsint.org](http://www.nbsint.org) or e-mail [nbs@nbsint.org](mailto:nbs@nbsint.org) or call 1-800-355-6627.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual ODU (UPM) Gold Tournament will be held at Ocean View Golf Course in Norfolk on Friday, August 12, at 9:00 a.m. The cost is \$50/person with 4/person Team Captain's Choice. Singles and doubles will be matched into groups of four. Fee includes green fees, cart, food, beverages & prizes! Entry deadline is Monday, August 1<sup>st</sup>. Register at [upm.peva@gmail.com](mailto:upm.peva@gmail.com). Proceeds will support the campus ministry at Old Dominion University. (P.S.: If you don't play golf, you may participate by sponsoring a hole for the tourney! Sponsorships = \$100/hole, with an individual sign placed on the green with the name, message or corporate logo included. For sponsorship, contact: [upsm.peva@gmail.com](mailto:upsm.peva@gmail.com).)

(There's also the 2011 PEVA Golf Extravaganza coming up at Sewells Point Golf Course on Sept. 26<sup>th</sup>. Registration deadline: Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>. Open to clergy and members of congregations.)

The University Presbyterian Ministry (UPM) at ODU is thriving! Bible study continues through the summer, and the fall 2011 semester will begin before we know it! Because the Ministry building experiences all this activity and is a safe, Christ-centered home to four students, upkeep and periodic renovations are necessary. Presently there is a need to renovate the second floor bathroom shared by these tenants. Improvements include plumbing replacement and repair, as well as flooring and the construction of cabinetry. If you would like to support this vital ministry by making a contribution toward this project, you may make a check payable to TTPC and mark on the memo line "ODU House Improvements" and we will forward the check through PEVA.

The Congo Mission Network Conference is among more than 25 PC (USA) networks that connect Presbyterians who share a common mission interest. "Empowerment Through Education in the Democratic Republic of Congo" will be held October 6-8 at Bayside PC in Virginia Beach. Email [tshiek@pcusa-peva.org](mailto:tshiek@pcusa-peva.org) or [llwspeaks@hotmail.com](mailto:llwspeaks@hotmail.com) for more information.

All the above information and info about many, many more activities are found in PEVA's weekly newsletter which is generally posted on the FYI bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall.

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And speaking of that bulletin board ... thanks to the quiet angel who has been working on spiffing up the FYI bulletin board and a couple of the others also! Don't they look much better? And she's not finished yet!

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**And now to close, this joke came in a recent e-mail:**

Johnny's Mother looked out the window and noticed him "playing church" with their cat. He had the cat sitting quietly and he was preaching to it. She smiled and went about her work. Awhile later she heard loud meowing and hissing and ran back to the open window to see Johnny baptizing the cat in a tub of water. She called out, "Johnny, stop that! The cat is afraid of water!" Johnny looked up at her and said, "He should have thought about that before he joined my church."