



"Do not be afraid,  
for I know that you seek  
Jesus who was crucified.  
He is not here; for He is risen  
Matthew 28

# MID-TENN

## Presbytery of Middle Tennessee E-Newsletter

April 2018

### Benefits Connections

Helping Church Employers Align Benefits and Values



**BOARD OF PENSIONS  
BENEFITS CONNECTIONS  
SEMINAR**  
April 19, 2018  
First Presbyterian Church,  
Nashville, TN

#### Who Should Attend?

People who drive benefits decisions and manage benefits for churches of all sizes - large and small.

During this one-day event you will learn about the theological values that shape the Benefits Plan, learn about new benefits and programs for 2019, ask questions of Board of Pensions leadership and staff, meet other benefits decision makers in your area, and participate in a panel of your peers.

Registration is open to anyone. The event will include lunch, learning, and networking opportunities.

Go to the Board of Pensions website ([click here](#)) for more information and to register.

### RESURRECTION POWER AND HOPE!

By Warner Durnell, EP

It was shortly after 8:00 pm (Eastern Time) on the evening of April 4, 1968, when the telephone rang at the home of my rearing. I picked up the receiver after the first ring (which was the only way to beat one of my sisters in answering) and it was my classmate Lillian on the other end. Her father was

the lone black mortician in our hometown and she was calling to tell me that her dad had gotten word through his channel of professional contacts, even before our local news broadcast, that the



Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had been murdered just a couple hours prior in Memphis, Tennessee. As that news began to widely circulate, the horror of this event began to sink into the consciousness of many Americans; "The man who preached love and practiced non-violence had been violently killed by hate!"

A wide span of human emotion quickly arose at the news of the Rev. Dr. King's assassination. On one end of the emotional spectrum there was great grief with its sea-full of sorrow among those who mourned this tragedy. Some who lived on the bare margins of the American dream set fires of outrage in Washington, DC, and in other major cities across the country. On the other end there was great glee with gladness among those who viewed King's death as a dissipation of his dream. Dr. Constance Dees, of Huntsville, Alabama, was a graduate student at the University of Alabama the spring of 1968, and well remembers how many in her dormitory threw a party in their hallway, laughing, singing, even tossing confetti and banging pots, at the news of King's death.

News of the death of a prophet, of a Spirit-inspired social change-agent...[read more.](#)



**Ministers Baseball Outing  
May 7, 2018**

**It is time to get together  
and watch some  
baseball!**

We have 20 free tickets for the Nashville Sounds baseball game at noon on Monday, May 7. These tickets are available on a first-come basis to Presbytery members in active service (pastors, chaplains, certified educators, faculty, and campus ministers). These tickets will be available until April 16. After that, they will be open to any retired members of Presbytery. To reserve your ticket send your name and phone number to

[MidTennBaseball@yahoo.com](mailto:MidTennBaseball@yahoo.com)

**RECAP**

Nashville Sounds vs Memphis Redbirds

Monday, May 7 at Noon  
First Tennessee Park,  
Nashville

Free tickets for Active clergy, etc. until April 16.

If you have any questions, call Sherard at 615-444-1360.



**Committee on Mutual Support (CMS)**

Monday, April 9

**GUATEMALA MISSION TRIP HIGHLIGHTS**

**March 2018**

*submitted by David Carlton*

A mission team representing the PMT's Guatemala-Petén Partnership Committee (GPCC) has just returned from a productive, enlightening, and inspiring week of consultation and communion with our partners in the Q'eqchi Presbytery of the Petén (PQP). The Team consisted of Barb Hall, Team Leader from East Brentwood, Pastor John Hilley of East



Brentwood, Lavona Russell of East Brentwood, and David Carlton of Second, Nashville. We also enjoyed the company of two non-Presbyterian ministers, James Denning and Stephen Cottingham, who joined us on a fact-finding mission as representatives of the Christian Legacy Foundation.

On our arrival in Guatemala City on Friday, March 2, we were met by our long-time friend and PMT member Philip Beisswenger, who with our super-competent driver, Alfredo, carried us to the highland coffee-growing center of Cobán, where we were treated to dinner at the home of Phil, his wife Bacilia, and their three children. Afterward we piled into the bus again for a long trip to the river town of Sayaxché.

On Sunday we proceeded to the aldea of San Juan Acúl, on the Rio Pasion (We learned that the name refers to the turtles common to the river banks). There we enjoyed the overflowing hospitality of the local congregation, led by their



pastor (and our long-time friend) Gonzalo Macz. We joined them for two worship services, morning and evening, each featuring a sermon by John Hilley and musical offerings from both our Q'eqchi hosts and

ourselves (the evening service also featured a veritable snowstorm of moths!). In the afternoon we did a craft project with the children (which allowed the children to teach us how to spell their names!)...[read more.](#)

**2017 CHURCH MATH**

*By Therese Howell, Stated Clerk*

The 2017 "Statistics of the Church" are in... so how did the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee do this year, statistically speaking? The presbytery lost members, but losses appear to be churches cleaning their rolls, since there were no churches dismissed or dissolved in 2017. While total active members decreased to 16,291 from 16,866 in 2016, total adherents (baptized children and others who have not joined) increased



10:00am  
Presbytery office

**Committee on Ministry  
Prevention Training  
"Birth of a Boundary"**

Tuesday, April 10  
9:30am - 2:30pm  
FPC Franklin  
(COM meeting to follow)

**Administrative Committee**

Thursday, April 19  
1:00 pm  
Presbytery office - Rm 196

**Finance Committee**

Thursday, April 19  
2:30 pm  
Presbytery office - Rm 196

**Committee on  
Preparation of Ministry  
(CPM)**

Tuesday, April 17  
4:00 pm  
FPC Nashville - Bryant  
Conference Room

**CE Brown Bag**

Monday, April 23  
11:30 am  
Presbytery office - Rm TBD

**Synod GA Commissioner  
Training**

April 29-30  
FPC Franklin

**May Stated Presbytery  
Meeting**

Thursday, May 3  
FPC Tullahoma

**SAVE THE DATES!**



**223rd General Assembly  
(2018)**

June 16-23, 2018  
St. Louis, Missouri

**[Click here for more  
information and  
registration](#)**

to 19,603, up from 19,513 in 2016. The number of total membership gains for 2017 was 503; not too much lower than 2016 (566) and 2015 (569).

The age distribution of active members showed an increase in the 26-45 category, to 3,282. This same category in 2016 was 3,169, and in 2015 it was 3,177. Membership of persons 25 and under was 2,249, not too much less than 2016 (2,337) and 2015 (2,318). Christian education reported an increase in younger Presbyterians, too!

And while total membership in the presbytery is down, the diversity of the presbytery continues to increase, both in membership and in leadership. And there continues to be more female members than male members.

A shout out to the churches with a net membership gain: Belfast (3); East Brentwood (14); Harpeth (3); Nashville Korean (3); Westminster Columbia (7); Calvary Big Lick (4); Westminster Fairfield Glade (3); First Franklin (30); First Hendersonville (6); First McMinnville (1); Hopewell (1); First Murfreesboro (7); Downtown (8); First Nashville (18); Glen Leven (7); Westminster Nashville (47); First Smyrna (6). Of the 84 churches in the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee... [continue](#)

[View the 2017 Presbytery Report](#)

**Evangelical Presbyterian Arabic Community  
(EPAC)**

Since Christmas past, the Evangelical Presbyterian Arabic Community (EPAC) has been meeting for worship on Sunday evenings, at 6:00PM, in the Cheek House Chapel on the campus of First Presbyterian Church in Nashville.



These gatherings of about 40 Egyptian-Americans (see recent photo above) are proud and grateful for a nesting place at FPC Nashville, and have plans to swell their numbers significantly as other Arabic-speaking people in the region (Kurds and Iraqis just to name two groups), with evangelical (Protestant) ties, are introduced to their worship and fellowship assemblies. The strong desire of this congregation of largely, but not solely, Presbyterians, is to become a New Worshiping Community under the banner of the PCUSA, and conversations are beginning to take place between representatives of FPC Nashville, the Committee for Church Transformation of the Presbytery, and a steering group for the EPAC, to that end.

The Evangelical Presbyterian Arabic Community has a



**2018 Churchwide  
Gathering of Presbyterian  
Women**

August 2-5, 2018  
Louisville, Kentucky

[Click here for more  
information and  
registration](#)

pressing need for a sound system (click here for description) that will help to amplify voices and instruments for their Sunday worship and fellowship gatherings.

If your church has the equivalent sound-system, in whole or in part, please let Michael Abdelnour know by writing him at [Michael.abdelnour007@gmail.com](mailto:Michael.abdelnour007@gmail.com). If your church would like to partner with this largely Egyptian-American community right here in our midst, do not hesitate to contact the Presbytery Office at 615-332-3330.

---

**Links of Interest**

[Presbytery of Middle  
Tennessee](#)

[Synod of Living Waters](#)

[Presbyterian Church \(USA\)](#)

[Board of Pensions](#)

*You are receiving this e-newsletter because you are a member or friend of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee or one of its congregations.*

**DISCLAIMER:**

Articles and events that appear in the e-newsletter are believed to be of interest to some segments of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee. However, these articles and events are not necessarily endorsed by the Presbytery.