



MID-TENN

Presbytery of Middle Tennessee E-Newsletter



The Presbytery office will be closed the following dates for the holiday season:

- December 23, 2016
- December 26-28, 2016
- January 2, 2017



Presbyterian Giving
As Presbyterians, we are a people rooted in the grace of Jesus Christ. It is our gratitude for God's grace that moves us to join in God's mission in the world, with ministries of love and justice,

December 2016

BETHLEHEM TODAY

by Warner Durnell, Executive Presbyter

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from old, from ancient days. [Micah 5:2 NRSV]

While surfing the internet this morning up popped an advertisement from Abraham Tours, inviting its readers to, "Come celebrate Christmas in the place it all began!" A one day tour of Bethlehem would include a visit to the Shepherds Field, Manger Square, and the Church of the Nativity, along with fine dining and shopping for handcrafts. I well imagine hundreds, if not thousands, of Christian tourists will flock to Bethlehem this week to pay homage to the place where the Christ-child was born.

Last year the Rev. Kim Rodrigue and I were two from the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee, among a group of Jewish and Christian leaders from Nashville, who journeyed to Israel and the West Bank. One day of our

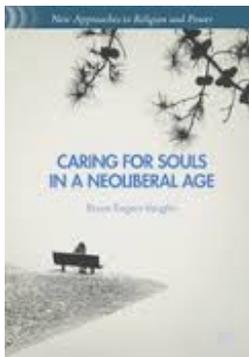


ten day tour was devoted to a visit of Bethlehem. We enjoyed fine dining in an Arab restaurant just up the hill from the Shepherds Field; we walked around Manger Square and snapped photos in the Church of the Nativity. This was a lovely, picturesque, inspirational and serene part of our tour of the West Bank; but also troubling.

While in Bethlehem we met with

reconciliation and peace. Generous gifts to the Presbyterian Giving Catalog are signs of our gratitude: feeding the hungry, comforting the broken-hearted, and sharing our faith with young and old. By joining our gifts together, however large or small, we expand our witness to God's gracious and abundant work in the world.

Please visit presbyteriangifts.org to see all the ways you can make a difference.



Caring for Souls in a Neo-liberal Age, by Bruce Rogers-Vaughn,

Bruce Rogers-Vaughn is a Second Presbyterian Church member and Associate Professor of the Practice of Pastoral Theology and Counseling at Vanderbilt Divinity School. This book is an in-depth analysis of how contemporary capitalism is eroding

from fellow Christians, Arab Christians, who welcomed us warmly as sisters and brothers in Christ. But they also reminded us of "the tension" that exists in their city, starting with the stark reality of the detested West Bank Barrier (security fence and formidable military wall). Admittedly, since the wall's construction, there has been a 90% reduction in terrorists' strikes in Israel, but this barrier has also imprisoned tens of thousands of Arabs in their own hometown. Being Arab and experiencing daily the encumbrances and insults that this wall has created pains them greatly. They also referenced the growing migration of fellow Christians to other parts of the region and beyond. This migration in part is due to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, but also because of the religious and cultural mistreatment, ranging from subtle to suffocating, that some Christians face from some of their staunchly conservative Muslim neighbors.



This Christmas, in the safe and softly-lit confines of our homes and churches here in the United States, we will be reminded through scripture and song that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea more than two thousand years ago. Today in Bethlehem 2016, Christian tourists flock in large numbers easily moving by the busload from east to west with no trouble. But today in Bethlehem 2016, Christian residents are confined behind barbed wire and concrete walls, not nearly as free to come and go as those who visit among them. That's how things are and likely will remain in Bethlehem as long as terror threats remain high and peaceful co-existence between neighbors continues to be elusive.

This Christmas 2016, let us sing and celebrate anew that "Christ was born in Bethlehem!" But let us also remember those followers of Christ who live, labor and worship in Bethlehem today, and pray God's preservation and peace upon them!

EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FIRE UPDATE

On Sunday, December 11, the Eastminster Presbyterian Church in the Inglewood area of East Nashville experienced a consuming fire of its sanctuary and educational building. Once the fire was



(Photo: Joe Buglewicz / For The Tennessean)

public, interpersonal, and psychological well being.

***The Future of
Mainline
Protestantism by
James Hudnut-
Beumler
(co-editor with Mark
Silk).***

James Hudnut-
Beumler is a PMT
Member and the Anne
Potter Wilson
Distinguished
Professor of American
Religious History at
Vanderbilt University.

**UPCOMING
MEETING DATES**

**Committee on
Mutual Support**
Tuesday, January 10
10:00 am
@ Presbytery office

Pastor-to-Pastors
Tuesday, January 10
12:00 noon
@ Presbytery office

**Committee on
Ministry**
Tuesday, January 10
4:00 pm
@ FPC Nashville

**Administrative
Committee**
Thursday, January 12
2:00 pm
@ FPC Nashville

Finance Committee
Thursday, January 12
3:30 pm
@ FPC Nashville

**Committee on
Preparation for
Ministry**
Tuesday, January 24
4:00 pm
FPC Nashville

contained and deemed safe, some members of the Eastminster Church were able to get into the office section of the Education wing and retrieve some files, books and other valuable items.

The Woodland Presbyterian Church has opened it doors to the Eastminster Church (both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking congregations) to hold its worship services in the coming weeks. Other churches of the Presbytery have also called to offer assistance as needed.

A sound system and projector have been identified and thank all that contributed to these needs.

Other needs as follows:

A table to leave on the stage where they can put a cross and their offering plates. Also would be used for communion.

A tall table or stand to put a projector and laptop on. They project scripture and songs in English and Spanish during their bilingual services.

Also, Eastminster Presbyterian Church has had a special account set up at USBank for anyone who would like to make monetary donations to Eastminster.

For more information regarding the above, please contact Connie Hamblen at connie_hamblen@vfc.com.

Please keep Eastminster Presbyterian Church lifted up in prayer, trusting that our God, who "gives beauty for ashes," will surprise them with mercy and grace overwhelming!.



**MISSION BANQUET
FEBRUARY 16, 2017
Nashville Korean Presbyterian Church
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm**

What is your mission?

What mission program is your church involved with? At its "heart," mission involves discovery. When we partner with each other, we discover truths about ourselves, other people, and ultimately about God's work in this world.

**128th Stated
Presbytery Meeting**
Saturday, February 4
First Presbyterian
Church
Murfreesboro, TN

Links of Interest

**[Tennessee Valley
Presbyterian
Cursillo Brochure](#)**

(sponsored by our
neighboring,
Presbytery of North
Alabama)

**[December Board
Connections](#)**

(the e-newsletter from
the Board of
Pensions)

Quick Links

**[Presbytery of Middle
Tennessee](#)**

**[Synod of Living
Waters](#)**

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

**[Presbyterian Disaster
Assistance](#)**

In the spirit of discovery and fellowship, the Presbytery Mission Banquet will be held on Thursday, February 16, 2017 at 6:00 PM, at the Nashville Korean Presbyterian Church to recognize the work of our churches.

1. By January 16, 2017 each church will submit a brief description of one of their mission programs and send that information to Committee on Mutual Support, in care of the Presbytery Office. [Please fill out the attached registration form.](#)

2. On February 16, 2017 each church is invited to attend the Mission Banquet. We hope each church will be represented by a member and their pastor or chair of the church's Mission Committee. We look forward to having all those in Middle Tennessee who are committed to mission and peacemaking gathered in one room.

3. The Mission Banquet will feature a mini mission fair, recognition of the mission programs, and a keynote address by Jeff Ritchie, retired Associate Director of Mission at the Outreach Foundation, and David Paduil, Ruling Elder at the Sudanese American Nuer Presbyterian Church. They will share, inform, and even entertain us concerning their faith in Jesus Christ and the work of the church here and abroad.

We look forward to the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee Mission Banquet as a way to share the work of our churches that do so much for others.

For complete details, [click here](#)
To register for the banquet, [click here](#)

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.