

Co-Executive Presbyters Report  
January 16, 2020

Visits

As we have had the opportunity to visit many of the churches and ministries around our presbytery, we have been consistently amazed by the generous and spontaneous welcome we've received, but also feel humbled and awed at the caliber of leadership and the passion for mission that is so apparent. God is tangibly at work among us in so many ways, from the sound preaching of God's word to the integrating of God's challenge in the life of the congregation and its surrounding community.

We've listened with PNC's as they struggle to discern the "right" candidate for their congregation; we've sat with some of the tireless, devoted leaders of our immigrant ministries and New Worshipping Communities to share with us their joy and excitement of the number of children and youth showing up to worship to hear the good news of Jesus Christ. And in that same breath, we listen as they dream of financial sustainability while struggling with diminishing funds. We hear of the significant repairs needed on a roof or windows of some of our older church buildings, but lack the funding to make these necessary repairs possible. Our smiles widen as a church member joyfully announces that "eight new members joined the church on Sunday!" Or when a young adult pops their head into our office to share the thrilling news that they are now "certified ready" to receive a call! From longstanding commitments to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, educate the children, and care for the vulnerable, to rallying the cries for justice and freedom, confronting racism and sexism, embracing immigrants, and inviting all voices and perspectives to our decision-making and fellowship tables, what a wonderfully diverse, committed and gifted, intelligent and imaginative, energetic and compassionate, faithful and transforming presbytery we have in Middle Tennessee.

We look forward to visiting all the churches we've not yet visited in the coming months. In our planning for those visits, we'd be very grateful to have someone from your church pass along your worship times ([robin.midtennpres@gmail.com](mailto:robin.midtennpres@gmail.com), [ray.midtennpres@gmail.com](mailto:ray.midtennpres@gmail.com)). Also, let us know if there are any upcoming special events or celebrations in your congregation that we can join.

Bringing Change

In our roles as your Co-Executive Presbyters, we take to heart our call to build up the church as the body of Christ. The 2020 Vision statement (approved in 2014) reads: *The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee is a community of churches and church leaders whose role is to guide and support the work of its constituents, striving to build up the body of Christ through connections of mutual support, creating a culture of leadership excellence, and church transformation.* We, Robin and Ray, strive to enable the presbytery to achieve these goals through:

- 1) **Equipping and Empowering Our Leaders.** We pursued, with the Nominating Committee, to invite a wide representation and an engaged core

- of leaders to serve on our committees. We begin this new year with all of our committees fully staffed! We held a Committee Orientation on January 4, with excellent participation, to bring our committee leadership together, focus and empower their work, and coordinate the steps ahead so we can move forward and stay connected, with intention and grace.
- 2) **Ensuring Timely Communication.** We have begun the practice of sending out electronic newsletters and periodic e-blasts to keep our churches and leaders informed about important news and celebrations. With the assistance of our new Administrative Assistant, Felicia Mesner, we hope to continue this practice. Please send any pertinent news and/or celebrations in your church and community to us! We look forward to sharing the news and events that our fully functioning committees will be developing as we live into the promise of Vision 2020.
  - 3) **Living Transparently.** We will thrive, as a healthy community, by loving and trusting one another. As we nourish this intentional environment of love and trust, we secure and exercise freedom to speak and take risks. Truth telling is expected and vital to building up the body of Christ. We encourage hard questions to be asked and we safeguard the sacred space for crucial conversations to happen. Over the last few months, with our new Treasurer, Steve Douse, and our Bookkeeper, Pat Webb, along with the members of the Finance and Administrative Committees, we've asked the hard questions about our annual budget, our stewardship outreach, our investing and use of the presbytery's funds. As a result of these conversations, the Finance Committee is presenting a balanced 2020 budget for approval. The Finance Committee is also committed to begin the budget process earlier for the 2021 and to invite all the committees to participate in that process.

We join you all in prayer for your congregations, your ministries, your faithful discerning and following the call of our Lord. We are conscious of, and thankful for, your prayers for us and for the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee.

Grace and Peace to you,

Ray and Robin Thomas  
Co-Executive Presbyters

## Visits by Robin and Ray Thomas, Presbytery of Middle Tennessee

- 1) Sunday Worship - March 3, 2019: **Woodland, Nashville** (R&R)
- 2) Sunday Worship - April 14, 2019: **Westminster, Nashville** (R&R)
- 3) Sunday Worship - April 21, 2019: **Trinity, Nashville** (R&R)
- 4) Sunday Worship - April 28, 2019: **First, Columbia** (R&R)
- Meeting with Chris Joiner, meet staff - April 30, 2019: **First, Franklin** (R&R)
- 5) Sunday Worship - May 12, 2019: **First, Nashville** (R&R)
- 6) Sunday Worship and Congregational Meeting - May 19, 2019: **Historic Franklin** (R&R)
- 7) Meet & Greet - May 20, 2019: **First, Murfreesboro** (R&R)
- 8) Meet & Greet - May 20, 2019: **First, Tullahoma** (R&R)
- 9) Meet & Greet - May 22, 2019: **First, Clarksville** (R&R)
- 10) Sunday Worship - June 2, 2019: **Second, Nashville** (R&R)
- 11) Sunday Worship - June 9, 2019: **Emmanuel, Nashville** (R&R)
- Vanderbilt/Belmont **UKirk** Tour with Lindsey Groves - June 12, 2019 (R&R)
- 12) Sunday Worship - June 16, 2019: **Downtown, Nashville** (R&R)
- 13) Shane Smith Installation - June 16, 2019: **Hillsboro, Nashville** (R&R)
- 14) Pre-Presbytery Visit - June 19, 2019: **Westminster, Columbia** (Ray)
- 15) Sunday Worship, 100th Anniversary - June 23, 2019: **Ellis Grove, Waverly** (R&R)
- 16) Sunday Worship - June 30, 2019 - **Glenclyff & Nueva Vida** (w/ E. Brentwood) (R&R)
- Toby Mueller Installation - June 30, 2019: **Historic Franklin** (R&R)
- 17) Sunday Worship - July 7, 2019: 9 a.m.: **Telos Southminster**, 11 a.m.: **Southminster, Nashville** (R&R)
- 18) Sunday Worship - July 14, 2019: **First, Franklin** (R&R)
- 19) Meet & Greet - July 17, 2019: **Allardt Presbyterian, Allardt** (R&R)
- Presbytery Meeting - July 20, 2019: **Westminster, Columbia** (R&R)
- 20) Sunday Worship - July 21, 2019: **New Creation, Hendersonville** (R&R)
- 22) Visit with Milldale - July 24, 2019: **Hendersonville, First and Springfield, Milldale** (Ray)
- 23) Visit with Janet Salyer - July 25, 2019: **Brentwood, Harpeth** (R&R)
- 24) Sunday Worship - July 28, 2019: **Nashville, St. Andrew's** (R&R)

- 25) Meet & Greet - July 30, 2019: **Nashville, Hillwood** (R&R)
- 26) Sunday Worship - August 11, 2019: **Smyrna, First** (R&R)
- Meredith Cox Ordination - August 11, 2019: Nashville, Woodland (R&R)
- Sunday Worship and Congregational Meeting - August 18, 2019: Nashville, Emmanuel (Ray)
- Sunday Worship - August 18, 2019: Nashville, Trinity (Robin)
- 27) Pastor-to-Pastor Team - August 27, 2019: **Lebanon, First** (R&R)
- 28) Sunday Worship - September 1, 2019: **Manchester, First** (R&R)
- 29) Sunday Worship - September 8, 2019: **Hermitage** (R&R)
- 30) Sunday Worship, 175th Anniversary - September 15, 2019: **Spring Hill, First** (Robin)
- Sunday Worship - September 15, 2019: Brentwood, Harpeth (Ray preaching)
- 32) Sunday Worship - September 22, 2019: **Normandy & Belfast** (Ray preaching)
- Lunch with folks from **Lewisburg, First** (Ray)
- Sunday Worship - September 22, 2019: Glenclyff & Nueva Vida (Robin)
- Sunday Worship, 150th Anniversary - October 13, 2019: Hendersonville, First (R&R)
- 33) Meeting with PNC - October 16, 2019: **Springfield, First** (R&R)
- Presbytery Meeting - October 17, 2019: Nashville, Second (R&R)
- 34) Presbyterian Womens' Retreat - October 26, 2019: **Nashville, Priest Lake** (Robin)
- 35) Sunday Worship - October 27, 2019: **Donelson** (R&R)
- Jane Herring Installation - October 27, 2019: Nashville, Emmanuel (R&R)
- Session Meeting - October 28, 2019: Nashville, Southminster (R&R)
- Session Meeting - October 28, 2019: Nashville, Trinity (R&R)
- 36) Session & AC Meeting - October 30, 2019: **Nashville, Bellevue** (Ray)
- 37) Sunday Worship - November 3, 2019: **East Brentwood** (Ray)
- 38) Sunday Worship, 40th Anniversary - November 3, 2019: **Brentwood, First** (Robin)
- 39) Sunday Worship - November 10, 2019: **Nashville, Glen Leven** (R&R)
- Session Meeting - November 10, 2019: Nashville, Southminster (R&R)
- Sunday Worship - November 17, 2019: Nashville, Woodland (Robin preaching)
- 40) Sunday Worship - November 24, 2019: **Thompson Station, Bethesda** (Robin)

Sunday Worship - December 1, 2019: Springfield, First (R&R preaching)

Sunday Worship - December 8, 2019: Murfreesboro, First (R&R)  
Tullahoma, First (R&R)

Sunday Worship & Congregational Meeting - December 15, 2019: Nashville, Trinity (R&R)

41) Session Meeting - December 15, 2019: **Gallatin, Sudanese** (R&R)

Festival of Lessons & Carols - December 15, 2019: Nashville, Hillwood (R&R)

December 16, 2019: **NaCoMe** (R&R)

Sunday Worship - December 22, 2019: Nashville, First (R&R)

Christmas Eve Worship - December 24, 2019: Nashville, Second (R&R)

Sunday Worship - January 5, 2020: Nashville, Hillwood (Robin)

Sunday Worship - January 5, 2020: Nashville, Bellevue (Ray)

Ryan Moore Installation Service - January 12, 2020: Nashville, First (R&R)

42) Sunday Worship - January 19, 2020: **Cookeville, First** (R&R)