

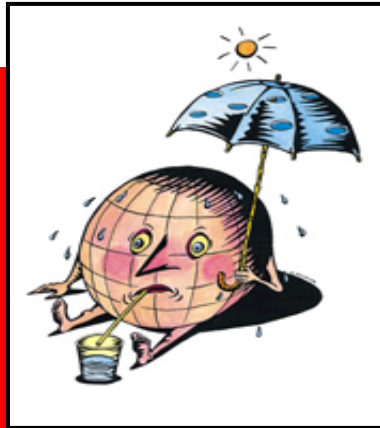
January 2007



THE CHURCH'S MISSION AND GLOBAL WARMING

The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. -Psalm 24:1

In a city where the average January temperature is 22°F, it was 42° at 8AM when I walked into the hotel lobby. I met a man at the coffee counter who was about my age, old enough to have seen a few winters. "Great weather we're having, eh?" he said with a smile.



I'd prefer a hard winter to a wimpy one. A good northern winter provides opportunities to ice fish, snow shoe, ice skate and down hill ski. I've never taken to snowmobiling or cross country skiing, but I know a lot of people who prefer snow to mud, and a warm winter means mud. All of this aside, Global Warming had been on my mind for days.

"In the short run these warm temperatures seem nice," I responded to the man, "but aren't you a bit concerned about what this means for the long haul? The trend line is for warmer and warmer seasons. If we don't curb the emissions that contribute to the increase in the earth's temperature, we're going to be in trouble."

This was a bit much for coffee counter conversation. "I think the jury is still out on that," he said. Then he added, "We've even had mini ice ages before. I don't think it

is a problem."

"We're losing glaciers world wide," I said. "Things are out of balance. These warm days only remind me of it, as though giving us a warning."

"I think it's too early to know just what the future looks like," he said. "Just look at Minnesota. It's cold there."

"Global warming may not be much of a problem for you and me," I said to him, "but it will change the world for our grandchildren, and not for the better. And that's why you and I have a stake in it."

From off to the side came another voice: "I'm for the warm weather!" as if to say "You're nuts!" It was the custodian getting his two cents in. I smiled at him, shaking my head. In my shirt sleeves, I walked out the door to my car. I turned the ignition over feeling like a failed prophet on this unseasonably warm January day.

I'm not sure what is so controversial about Al Gore's film *An Inconvenient Truth*. Any controversy should be focused on our government's myopic unwillingness to respond to problems we perpetuate, not on questions about the science. For Christians it is a question of stewardship, of care taking, of preserving what God has given. When government acts in behalf of the common good, then God is served. Our responsibility, I reason, is to be a voice for sanity, a light in the darkness.

My first real awareness of global warming as a matter of human concern, rather than a scientific or academic abstraction, came from Pacific Islander Christians whom I met at a World Council of Churches' Conference in Athens, Greece in 2005. A rising ocean level, caused by global warming and ice melt, was eating away at their island homes. As Christians whose homes were being literally taken away from them, global warming was their preeminent

faith concern. They wanted to bring that concern to the world Christian community as a matter of stewardship for the common good.

Six months after that conference I was dumbstruck, as many of us were, by the force of hurricanes Katrina and Rita that ravaged the Gulf Coast and much of Florida: their severity related to the warm water in the Gulf of Mexico. The lives of people were incredibly disrupted. The response of the church on the recovery side has been both commendable and exhilarating. But if our support of policy change could help prevent such ravages of nature in the future, wouldn't it be an act of faithfulness to become more actively engaged in advocacy with our government too?

Perhaps the jury is still out, not on the science, but on the church and its stewardship witness, its concern for the generations who follow us, our faithfulness to God represented in our willingness to care, to advocate, to bear witness for the common good. The jury is out.

Check out these PC(USA) web resources related to Global Warming :

The Washington Office. *Global Warming: Are We Reaching a "Tipping Point"?* explores the ecumenical responses of churches, and encourages advocacy. www.pcusa.org/washington/issuenet/enviro-060315.htm

The Presbyterian Hunger Program web site describes aspects of the problem and what can be done by individuals and churches for life style change that makes a difference.

www.pcusa.org/hunger/features/climate2.htm

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NOR'E-NEWS

SYNOD OF THE NORTHEAST



A GIFT TO THE SYNOD FROM BOSTON PRESBYTERY

At the Fall Synod Assembly of 2006, commissioners from Boston Presbytery presented the Synod of the Northeast with a restored photograph of the elder, 4 ministers present at the first meeting of the original Synod of New Eng-

land, which met at the First PC of Boston on October 22, 1912. Our thanks to our New England commissioners for this gift and the legacy of Presbyterian service in New England it represents.

THE TIME BETWEEN: INTERIM MINISTRY WEEK ONE **FEBRUARY 12–16, 2007** **PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

Interested in Interim Ministry? Pastors come to interim ministry training to ascertain whether this specialized form of transitional ministry suits their gifts and graces and to develop the specialized knowledge and skills to make such ministry effective. They come from a variety of backgrounds.

The Time Between, a course co-sponsored by the Synod of the

Northeast and Princeton Theological Seminary, is designed to teach the basic skills for those considering or just beginning interim ministry.

Participants explore the unique dynamics of congregations in transition, the work of the intentional interim pastor as leader in transition time, biblical foundations for interim ministry, and the impor-

tance of the congregation's relationship with the presbytery. Those attending should be ordained ministers or individuals with judicatory responsibilities related to interim ministry. Ecumenical participation is welcomed and encouraged.

Faculty leaders in 2007 are the Rev. Cheryl Montgomery of Greenwood Presbyterian Church, Whitewater Valley Presbytery, and

the Rev. Scott Lumsden, of Cottage Lake Presbyterian Church, North Puget Sound Presbytery.

For more information on this event, go to the Princeton Theological Seminary's Continuing Education website at

<http://www.ptsem.edu/CE/Course-InterimMinWk1.php>.

ADVOCACY DAYS FOR GLOBAL PEACE WITH JUSTICE HOW ARE CHILDREN? MARCH 9-12, 2007 AT DOUBLETREE HOTEL ~



...and How are the Children?
2007 Conference • March 9-12 • Washington, D.C.

Since 2003 Ecumenical Advocacy Days has been an annual gathering of Christian partners, grounded in biblical witness and shared traditions of justice and peace. Through worship, theological reflection and opportunities for learning and witness, participants mobilize on a wide variety of U.S. domestic and international policy issues. This year participants from all over the United States will gather to focus on issues related to the health and well being of children. The eminent theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote that "the test of the morality of a society is how it treats its children." How we value and respect children – and whether we shape our public policies to bless their present and future – reflects who we are and the kind of world in which we want to live. Some scholarships may be available to assist those interested. For more information call the synod office or go to the Ecumenical Advocacy Days web page: www.advocacydays.org/index.php

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LONG ISLAND PRESBYTERY ELECTS NEW INTERIM EXECUTIVE PRESBYTER

Long Island Presbytery has called the Rev. Ellen F. Marquardt as Interim Executive Presbyter effective January 15, 2007. A graduate of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Rev. Marquardt has



served as the Director of Ecumenical Ministries in Calloway County, TX, the local mission arm of 13 area churches from six denominations. Subsequently she has served Heartland Presbytery as Associate Executive Presbyter for Congregational Nurture.

Welcome Ellen.

NEWTON PRESBYTERY ELECTS ACTING EXECUTIVE



The Rev. Jean Johnston has been elected by the Newton Presbytery to be the Acting Executive Presbyter. For the last 5 years, Rev. Johnston has served the presbytery as the Associate Executive Presby-

ter. She received her B.S. in Education from Westminster College in New Wilmington, PA and her M. Div. from The Theological School of Drew University in 1984. Before coming to Newton as Associ-

ate Executive, Jean had served in a variety of pastoral positions at four different Presbyterian Churches in New Jersey

Welcome Jean.