

# NATIONAL X PRESS

THE NATIONAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

JULY/AUG 2008 | VOLUME 8

## 2008 SUMMER ADULT CLASSES

Summer Series on  
The Ten Commandments  
Sundays at 9:15 a.m.

**July 6**  
You Shall Not Make Idols  
Rev. Eunice McGarrahan

**July 13**  
You Shall Not Misuse the Name  
of the Lord your God  
Dr. Ann White

**July 20**  
Remember the Sabbath Day  
By Keeping It Holy  
Rev. Donna Marsh

**July 27**  
Honor Your Father and Mother  
Angela Bouma

**August 3**  
You Shall Not Commit Murder  
Rev. Eunice McGarrahan

**August 10**  
You Shall Not Commit Adultery  
Mitch Gore

**August 17**  
You Shall Not Steal  
Sam Kyzar

**August 24**  
You Shall Not Bear False Witness  
Brian Clayton

**August 31**  
You Shall Not Covet  
Dr. Ann White

NATIONAL X PRESS

### DEADLINES

**September/October:** August 1  
**November/December:** October 1  
**January/February:** December 1  
**March/April:** June 1

### STAFF

**Editor:** Richard Armstrong  
**Staff Editor:** Kate Brinkley

## National Looks to “a Future and a Hope”

*Committee on Ministry Provides Experienced Help in Interim*

*By Keith Patman, NPC Elder*

After going through a church assessment early this year, our leadership and congregation continued a time of self-examination. This process, never particularly easy or even comfortable, ultimately led to our Senior Pastor’s resignation, accepted by the membership on June 1 and effective October 20. This development may be a new source of anxiety for some, but we know from scripture that the Lord has “plans...to give us a future and a hope” (Jer. 29:11).

How will this be realized among us? While it is reassuring to know that steps are in place for the transition (see below), it’s essential to recognize that God uses our experience of struggle and pain to bring about the growth he intends for us.

On June 23, Dr. Larry Hayward, a representative from National Capital Pres-

bytery’s Committee on Ministry, met with NPC’s session to discuss preliminary steps in our interim period. Then, on July 7, presbytery’s moderator, Wilson Gunn, will meet with session to present more specific interim steps to be taken. A congregational meeting on July 20 will provide information about some of the next steps and offer our membership an opportunity to vote on some organizational changes.

The skill and experience that Presbytery is able to provide, and has provided to other churches in similar circumstances, will be a great help to NPC as we navigate our way through the interim period, then on to a call for the permanent position of Senior Pastor/Head of Staff.

At the June 23 meeting Dr. Hayward commended leadership on taking many of the steps of reflection and assessment

*Continued on page 4*

## Recycling Efforts Gear Up, More to Follow

*It is easy being green, after all!*

*by Kate Brinkley, Director of Communications*

Facilities manager, Tony LeMenager, has been busy all over our campus, overseeing the installation of new copper guttering on the church roof, making sure the air conditioning system is cooling sufficiently for these warm summer months, and testing a lock system for better security.

But those aren’t the only efforts Tony has been concerned with these days. He’s also working to make NPC a little “greener” each day by placing recycling containers across the campus. For the last several years, we’ve had boxes for recycling paper

in our offices, but now we have containers strategically placed by the copiers in the Administration and Agencies Buildings. To avoid being mistaken for trash cans, these recycling bins have lids with slots that only (we hope!) paper can fit through.

There are also receptacles in Stone Hall and the church kitchen with round holes suited for recycling cans and bottles. Similar bins may be found in the kitchens of the Administration and the Agencies Buildings.

With some bilingual help, we’re train-

*Continued on page 4*

# Summer Missions Continue...

## *Our South Africa Team Returns as Other Teams Head Off*

**O**n May 16 a mission team left NPC for ten days to work with our mission partner, *Unsung Heroes*, in townships across South Africa. Led by Executive Pastor Doug Learned, the team included Keith Patman, NPC Elder and Wycliffe Bible translator, NPC member and NPS parent Karen Greisdorf, Moderator of Deacons Irene Koerner, and NPC staff member Holly Novak.

These are some of the photos taken by team member and professional photographer Karen Greisdorf on the trip.



One of many smiles that captured our hearts.



NPC mission team member Holly Novak plays the flute for children at the Leutlwetse Early Childhood Development Center and Haven.



Team with *Unsung Heroes* staff: Top (l-r): Keith Patman, Madoda Nzima, Doug Learned. Middle row (l-r): Karen Greisdorf, Holly Novak, Lance Carr, Julie Lama. Bottom row: Irene Koerner, and Christy Elliott.



South African township of Tembisa.



Doug Learned (r) with Pastor Jones Xola Nzo(l) at Change Bible Church

# Our Columbarium, a Place of Peace

by Sally Kaplan, NPC Trustee

**B**elow the sanctuary in a hallway just off Stone Hall lies one of the most contemplative and lovely areas of the NPC campus: the columbarium. Each year on Communion of the Saints Sunday after worship, a service of remembrance is held in the columbarium to honor the memory of all those whose urns reside in the columbarium. But most of us walk by those rooms without ever realizing the purpose or the sanctity within.

A columbarium is a permanent resting place for “cremains,” or cremated remains. The term “columbarium” is derived from “columba,” the Latin word for dovecote, a resting place for the dove, which seems a fitting place for the remains of a Christian.

Early Christians used the word to describe places, such as the catacombs, where the dead were interred. In times of persecution, they also sought shelter in these places for worship. While we no longer worship in the columbarium, many still enjoy it as a place for reflection and meditation. It’s cherry walls and carpeted floors edged with marble, provide an area of warmth, beauty, and dignity

— a wonderful place for prayer.

With changes in modern society, churches no longer provide consecrated ground for burial near churches. In our mobile society, cemeteries are increasingly distant from families and friends. Our church and many others have established columbariums for our congregation and others of the Reformed faith.

For those electing cremation, NPC’s columbarium provides a consecrated area to contain their ashes. The process is called “inurnment.” Ashes are placed in a specially sized urn that is put in a niche that holds up to six urns. The door has a brass plaque identifying the urns housed within the niche. In addition, there is a memorial wall with engraved plates as a means of honoring those not interred in the columbarium.

The NPC columbarium is accessible by elevator in the narthex outside the sanctuary, by the stairway, and directly from the parking lot or through Stone Hall. (It’s also right around the corner from the nursery.) Within the columbarium there are four small rooms representing the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

## Labor Day Weekend ALL-CHURCH PICNIC

in the Fountain Courtyard

Sunday, August 31, at noon

Come to NPC on Labor Day Sunday, August 31 and join the NPC community for food, fun and friendship!



The cost of a place in the columbarium is primarily, tax-deductible (you should consult your tax advisor to find out about the implications for your specific circumstances). To find out more about our columbarium, please contact Shirley Best, SBest@NationalPres.org or 202.537.7509.

# A Sound Alternative, Always One with Christ

by Rev. Eunice McGarraban, Associate Pastor for Grow Ministries

As we think about our own mortality, many wonder if it is permissible for Christians to be cremated. There is a long history in the church of careful burial of the body, accompanied by teaching that cremation was a pagan and sacrilegious act, often performed by enemies of the faith. So, the tradition of burial came about as a response to the practices of pagan religions and world views.

Some also worry that cremation might affect the resurrection of the body. But, if God created the world from nothing and humankind from dust, then we must trust that our Creator God will also be able to raise us according to the gracious promise of the scriptures.

Today cremation may be preferred for several reasons. It may be because of a lack of burial space and/or a desire to be stewards of God’s precious resources. On the other hand, cremation may be an expression of an anti-Christian rejection of the value of the body. While the scrip-

tures describe the practice of burial among the people of God, there is no rule given for how we should care for bodies after death. Because bodies matter to God, whatever we do should be done with great dignity, respect and care. We must also remember that when we die, we are no longer in our bodies. We are in and with Christ, waiting for the glorious resurrection of our bodies.

Timothy George, Dean of Beeson Divinity School, wrote in *Christianity Today* (May 21, 2002): “Regardless of whether a believer chooses burial or cremation, the Christian church should offer a funeral liturgy in which the reality of death isn’t camouflaged and the resurrection of the body is affirmed.” As well, we need to remember and act on the witness of the church that affirms that no matter what, “in life and in death we belong, body and soul, not to ourselves but to our faithful Savior, Jesus Christ...” (*Heidelberg Catechism*, Question 1).

## Recycling

*Continued from page 1*

ing our custodial staff to recycle the cans, bottles, cardboard, paper, etc. they now dispose of in the trash, in addition to disposing of the relatively large amount of trash that is a by-product of the good work being done by our ministries and missions.

Here's how you fit in: When you drink a cup of water in Stone Hall after worship, place the used cup in the royal blue recycling container conveniently located near the hallway leading to the parking lot, rather than in the trash can. When you come to a meeting or class on a Sunday or a weeknight, do the same.

If you have occasion to use our copiers and print a run of bright yellow brochures or flyers rather than the pretty orchid you had intended to use, place the extra copies in the blue recycling bin with the long diagonal slit in the lid.

Whenever you start to throw away a piece of trash, stop and think about whether or not you could recycle instead. Our children and grandchildren have probably learned about recycling in school and would be happy to guide us through the process. But more than all that, it's good stewardship of the wonderful gift of God's creation.

## Stocks – Your Gift Benefits All

*By Randy Wagner, Interim Director of Finance*

A gift of stock is a great way to donate to NPC in support of our ministries and missions; you may even choose to designate a particular program in your gift. Besides helping NPC in its many ministries, the donor usually benefits from tax advantages available from such giving. As always, you should consult your financial advisor or a knowledgeable resource for details and requirements.

Giving a gift of appreciated stock is very easy to do. First, contact me in NPC's Finance Office (see contact information below) for the appropriate information you will need to complete the transaction and to discuss where the proceeds will go. I'll for-

ward to you the relevant information that you'll need to pass on to your broker or financial advisor. Once the shares have been transferred to the church's custodial bank, they will be sold immediately and, after settlement, credited to the account you've chosen.

A gift of appreciated stock is a winner for you and, of course, NPC. We are always grateful for such gifts above your weekly faith giving

To get started with a stock transfer or if you have any further questions regarding a gift of appreciated stock, contact me, Randy Wagner, in the NPC Finance Office, 202.537.7484 or [RWagner@NationalPres.org](mailto:RWagner@NationalPres.org).

## A Future and a Hope

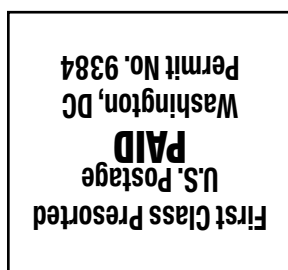
*Continued from page 1*

already that are recommended during the interim period. Session continues to examine our church's current state. Our leadership asks that everyone in the congregation seeks the transformation to which NPC is called, through personal and corporate examination and confession, listening to God's word, and focused study of the "one another" commands of Scripture.

In the same passage from Jeremiah

referenced above, the Lord speaks to his people through the prophet to say, "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" (29:13). The pain and personal sacrifices will be worth it, if that is the result.

NPC elders will keep you informed throughout the process, with periodic updates in the worship bulletin, on our web site, and in this newsletter.



The National Presbyterian Church  
4101 Nebraska Ave., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20016  
[www.NationalPres.org](http://www.NationalPres.org)