

Presbytery Calendar/Events

Youth Council

Friday, August 21-22 @ Bedford Presbyterian Church

Youth Event

Middle School Retreat October 2-3, 2009 @ Camp Hat Creek
“No Longer Strangers” Keynote by the Rev. Kelly Kaufman, Associate Pastor
River Road P.C., Richmond
Music by Brian Dove, Virginia Commonwealth University
Watch for details in Peaks Postings

“Magnetic Church”

A Church Development Conference
September 18 & 19, 2009 at Colonial PC, Roanoke
Sponsored by the Division of Church Development/Redevelopment
See [www. Peakspresbytery.org](http://www.Peakspresbytery.org) for more information and for registration form.

Presbytery of the Peaks’ Leadership Event

Saturday, October 17, 2009 at Second Presbyterian Church, Roanoke
Keynote Speaker: Richard Boyce, Associate Professor
of Preaching and Pastoral Leadership
at Union Union/PSCE, Charlotte, NC

Presbytery Resource Center

Books, DVDs on resources for worship, small group ministry,
youth ministry, evangelism and more are available for check out.
Visit, call, or email mary@peakspresbytery.org

Next Presbytery Meeting:

Thursday, October 29, 2009 at First Presbyterian Church, Martinsville, VA

Future 2010 Dates

Saturday, February 6, 2010

Tuesday, May 4, 2010

Saturday, July 24, 2010

Thursday, October 28, 2010

Locations: We are in need of Host Churches for 2010.

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For Our Congregations

Presbytery Meeting Highlights July, 2009

This bulletin insert is designed for the members of our 136 congregations.

Report of the Reverend Dr. Nancy Dawson, General Presbyter,

At the February Presbytery Meeting I shared the results of the 2008 Statistical Report for the Presbytery in terms of membership. The good news is that in 2008 we gained 600 members. The bad news is that we lost 1200. If this trend continues we will no longer exist as individual churches or as a presbytery in just 30 years! There are many reasons why and how we have gotten to this point. One I believe is our lack of openness to God’s call especially when it doesn’t fit with our own plans. Part of the reason for this, I think, is complacency. We like our churches the way they are, we enjoy a sense of belonging, comfort, familiarity and support. We are more concerned with those who are “in the church” than we are with those who are not involved or connected. Certainly, one of the ministries of the church is to serve the members, but God’s primary call to the church is the Great Commission – Matthew 28:19 “Go, and make disciples of all nations ...” God’s main reason for the church to exist is for the people who do not know Christ and who have yet become involved in a life of faith. This means that we are to be passionately committed to telling others the good news of the Gospel. And in today’s world, this may mean that we need to do so in ways that are different from the past. The questions before us are these:

Are you listening for God’s call to your congregation and yourself or are you seeking to satisfy your own needs and agenda?

What do you need to do to become more comfortable sharing your faith with others? Are you willing to do so?

Are you willing to try new ways of doing ministry (while still being faithful to the Gospel) to reach those who need to hear of God’s love and grace?

I believe that as we are faithful God will provide us with all the courage and wisdom and spiritual gifts we need to become ***Bold Servants of Transformation to the Glory of the Triune God.***

Highlights: The Eighty-first Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of the Peaks on Thursday, July 25 was hosted by Forest Presbyterian Church. The meeting was called to order by the Moderator, Tom Gillespie, elder at Danville First. It was a joy filled and faithful time as we celebrated the

500th Birthday of John Calvin and the 20th Anniversary of the Presbytery of the Peaks.

We Gathered to Worship and Learn The Rev. Dr. Catherine Gonzalez, Professor Emerita of Church History, Columbia Theological Seminary led us in an inspiring worship service and later provided an informative and challenging presentation on our Presbyterian Identity and Heritage, titled “Don’t Blame Calvin!” Rev. Morgan Whitfield, Pastor, of Forest PC, Rev. Suzie Atkinson, Pastor, Diamond Hill and Rev. Emily Larsen, Pastor, New Concord led us in a celebration of communion. We were also blessed by the inspiring music of the Forest PC Choir and Praise Team.

John Collins, Elder, Chatham, Wanda McDowell, Elder, Holbrook and Rev. Hugh Springer, Stated Clerk provided helpful reflections on the formation of the Presbytery of the Peaks from its predecessor presbyteries Southern Virginia, Fincastle and Blue Ridge. All three speakers acknowledged that there were challenges in the process and change is never easy, but also readily admitted that we are a stronger presbytery with the gifts and history that each has brought to ministry in this part of Virginia. We recognized those present at the first meeting of the Presbytery of the Peaks on July 22, 1989 as well as those who had served as moderators of the three predecessor presbyteries and the Peaks Presbytery. The morning celebration was concluded with the lighting of a Birthday Cake for the Presbytery and the singing of “Happy Birthday!”

We Gathered for Fellowship After a delicious lunch and time of fellowship, we were energized by two youth, Samantha Chalker and Danielle Garrett who led us in singing one of the VBS songs from the VBS program that Forest had concluded just two days before the Presbytery Meeting.

We Gathered to do the Work of God’s Kingdom.

* Rev. Kim Steinhorst, member of the Administrative Commission for Peace Church provided an update on the work of the Commission as they continue to serve alongside the session including the approval of Rev. David Gellert and Elder, Richard Boothe, (Commissioned Lay Pastor Candidate) as Co-Temporary Supply Pastors for 6 months.

* The majority of the business addressed by the commissioners and the highlight of the afternoon was the examination, approval and welcoming of four pastors to the Peaks: Rev. Bill Love as Interim at Blacksburg PC, Rev. Shirley Larson as Pastor for Pearisburg and Narrows, Jason Grimes, candidate from Charleston-Atlantic Presbytery as pastor for High Bridge PC and Josh Robinson, candidate

from Grace Presbytery as Associate Pastor for Raleigh Court PC. Josh and Jason preached for the assembled body as part of their examination for ordination and both provided inspiring and thoughtful reflections on God’s Word. Many of the commissioners expressed appreciation and a deep sense of joy for these new leaders in the church.

* Approved the request of Fork Union, Arvon and Trinity Presbyterian Churches to allow Elder Joe Allmond, (candidate in the Commissioned Lay Pastor Program) to administer and preside at the Lord’s Supper for 1 year.

* Approved nominations from the Nominating Committee for various Leadership Positions on Presbytery Divisions and Committees as well as nominations from the Council for individuals to serve on the Presbytery Nominating Committee. Please see Peaks Posting for updates to the Divisions and Committees.

We Gathered to Celebrate

- We gave God thanks that the Presbytery of the Peaks ranked in the **TOP TEN!** Of all 173 Presbyteries in giving to 2 cents a meal in 2008! We also celebrated and gave thanks for the **\$288.80 received during lunch for 2 cents a meal.**

- Recognized the attendance of 239 persons:
 - 104 Elder Commissioners
 - 69 Minister Members (24 were excused and 9 were absent)
 - Total of 180 Voting Commissioners and Members**

59 Non-voting visitors (29 elders, 4 ministers, 20 others and 6 Presbytery staff

50 of the 136 churches were not represented

- Rev. David Etheridge, Pastor, St. Andrew PC expressed appreciation on behalf of the Presbytery to Forest Church for their excellent hospitality.

- Rev. Gary Scheidt, Pastor, Trinity Ecumenical Parish led the commissioners in prayer at the close of the meeting.