

NATIONAL X PRESS

THE NATIONAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

JULY/AUGUST 2006 | VOLUME 2

Summer Sunday Preaching Schedule

July 2

Preacher: Dr. Ronald White, Author and Historian

July 9

Preacher: Candidate for Associate Pastor for Christian Formation and Discipleship

July 16

Preacher: Dr. John Huffman, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Newport Beach, CA

July 23

Preacher: Dr. Jean Coyle, NPC's Temporary Assoc. Pastor for Congregational Care

July 30

Preacher: Rev. Peter James, Vienna Presbyterian Church, Vienna, VA

August 6

Preacher: Dr. John Crosby, Christ Presbyterian Church, Edina, MN

August 13

Preacher: Rev. Richard Kannwischer, First Presbyterian Church, San Antonio, TX

August 20

Preacher: Dr. Dolphus Weary, President, Mission Mississippi

August 27

Preacher: Rev. Douglas Learned

September 3

Preacher: Dr. Gareth Icenogle

An Interview with New Executive Pastor *Discipleship, Art, Kalamazoo, and a Pastor's Heart*

By Richard Armstrong, Editor

RP: When and how did you first hear the call to become a pastor?

DL: When I was in college, my original plan was to become a philosophy professor. But I spent my junior year studying in Florence, and as a result I found myself coming back to the roots of my faith. So when I returned to campus, I wound up getting a double major in both philosophy and religion. The chaplain at Kalamazoo College encouraged me to apply to Princeton Theological Seminary for graduate study. But first, I took a year off to work at the First Presbyterian Church in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The pastors on that staff noticed that I had some gifts for ministry and encouraged me to pursue them. And of course, that was only reinforced when I got to Princeton.

RA: You've been the senior pastor at your current church, but you'll be moving into an executive pastor role here at NPC. Why did you choose to make that kind of career move?

DL: I've been working as a generalist for the past twelve years, covering all the responsibilities of ministry: pastoral care, preaching, and administration. But recently, I've been thinking that I'd like to focus on some areas that I



enjoy the most: developing programs, establishing goals, managing staff, and so forth. I've come to realize that good church administration is an important key to making Christian ministries work.

RA: It's early yet, but what do you think some of your initiatives and goals will be?

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DEADLINES

September/October August 1

November/December October 1

March/April February 1

May/June April 1

July/August June 1

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NPC's West Serves on Mercy Ship in Ghana *Investing your life in a deeper way in God's service*

By Keith Patman

Several years ago Amanda West began looking for a new way to serve others. It wasn't that she was dissatisfied with her job at the non-profit organization National Trust for Historic Preservation—in fact, she loved it. But she sensed it was time to invest her life in a deeper way in God's service. For a long time her search didn't seem to be getting her anywhere. Then one day she was struck with the thought, "What if I take earning money out of the equation?"

Having made that step of faith—being willing to serve the Lord as an unpaid volunteer—Amanda discovered Mercy Ships on the web (see www.mercyships.org). She applied to this international Christian organization and was accepted for a one-year mission aboard the *Anastasis*.

Mercy Ships is primarily a medical mission. Two ships serve as their bases of operation—the *Caribbean Mercy* in Central America and the

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Investing in God's Service *Continued from page 1*

Anastasis along the coast of Africa. Actually, Amanda waited for a number of months with the understanding that a new ship, the *Africa Mercy*, would soon be ready. But since that ship is still not completely refurbished, Amanda decided to join the *Anastasis* for its final year of service.

Anastasis, Greek for "resurrection," is appropriately named. This Danish ocean liner, built in the 1950's, was purchased by Mercy Ships and given new life in 1978 as a floating hospital. It now docks in different ports of Africa and offers hope and healing to those in need of basic medical attention, providing such services as dental and eye care, vaccines, women's health care, and some surgical procedures, in particular treating those with facial deformities.

Amanda flew to Ghana on June 21 to board the *Anastasis*, which had just arrived from the coast of Liberia. For the next twelve months she will serve in the ship's communications office as the *Anastasis* team ministers in three Ghanaian ports. Her work includes welcoming aboard media teams that want to do stories about the mission, coordinating publicity efforts, writing, managing the ship's web site, and doing graphic design. She is part of an international community of about 250 aboard the *Anastasis*, which includes the ship's crew, the medical staff, and her fellow administrators. There

are career members and volunteers who are aboard for three weeks to one year. Some of the workers come as families, so childcare and schooling are also part of life on the ship.

Amanda's co-workers were very supportive—some even envious—as she left her job to step out on this venture. She also credits NPC with fostering an environment for exploring ways to put one's faith into action. Amanda went on two NPC mission trips, to Guatemala in 2001 and to South Africa in 2005. She served on the Mission Council, from 2003-05 as short-term missions chairperson.



Anastasis, the Mercy Ship in Ghana

Two former members of NPC's youth group are engaged in projects similar to Amanda's: Stuart Campbell is serving with the English Language Institute/China for two to three years, and Peter Mitchell is ending a year's internship working with college students at Durham University in England through Christian Union, a sister org to InterVarsity, and King's Church.

If you would like to receive updates from Amanda about her work in Ghana, contact her at amanda.west@mercyships.org. For information on other worldwide missions in which NPC is engaged, contact the Outreach Office, 202.537.7483 or HWeimer@NatPresCh.org.

A Ministry of Presence in NPC's Congregational Care

In Jean Coyle's first weeks as Temporary Associate Pastor of Congregational Care, she has felt right at home. Not only is she familiar with our church, having gone to seminary just down the street and lived in the area since 1983, but her background, experience, and personality seem beautifully suited to the caring ministries. "I have a strong sense of wonderment that God's



Dr. Jean Coyle

grace can flow through all of us," she explains. "Each of us can become a conduit of God's grace."

A twice-tenured professor in gerontology, Coyle has a passion for working with older persons, but her desire is to bring all generations together in a caring community.

"God creates us to spend our time on earth," explains

Coyle, "continually growing back to him spiritually." That is at the center of her understanding of Christian formation. In ministry to our congregation, she looks forward to helping each member of our NPC family in their journey back to God.

The office Dr. Coyle will occupy after July 7 (see *Office Moves*, below) represents the sense of legacy she feels in her work here at National. She was told that Dr. Tom Stone, beloved associate pastor in the 1960s and 1970s whose name graces our fellowship hall, took up quarters in that office. "That gives me a great sense of the continuum," she explains. "This congregation has two centuries of history in spreading the Good News."

If you'd like to reach Dr. Coyle by phone or e-mail, call 202.537.7505 or send a message to JCoyle@NatPresCh.org.

Office Moves Afoot — or more!

Wonderful new office changes are scheduled for your NPC staff. Based on Dr. Icenogle's charge to have all ministries under one roof, Congregational Care will be moving to the Administration Building. As we all know, that building isn't THAT big, so someone has to move to Agencies—that would be the Finance Office. And in case this doesn't sound confusing enough, we're installing a new phone system at the same time. The move is scheduled for July 5-7. We ask for patience and cooperation during this exciting time of change.

Interview with Doug Learned *Continued from page 1*

DL: Part of what's so exciting to me about coming to NPC is Dr. Icenogle's vision for small group and discipleship ministries. Participating in small groups has been among the richest experiences for me in my own ministry and in my own Christian life. So I'm very enthused about developing more of those opportunities here at NPC. The time I've spent with Gareth



Cindy, Peter, Clara, and Doug Learned in Florence, Italy.

talking about his vision for this church has been very inspiring. I like his theology. I like his methodology. I feel like I can really support what he's working to accomplish here.

RA: What do you feel are your particular strengths as a pastor and an administrator?

DL: I enjoy setting goals and trying to identify all the different ways you can implement those goals. In a church, for example, you often find that some groups are very much in favor of a given idea, some are opposed to it, and some are lukewarm. I like the process of helping groups compromise and find mutual areas of interest, so that we can all get behind a project and make it happen. I love that process of give and take among competing interests and priorities.

RA: Who have some of your mentors been in your career and what impact did they have on you?

DL: Two people stand out in particular. One of them I've already mentioned – Gary Dorrien, the Chaplain at Kalamazoo College. He was a true spiritual leader on that campus, who appealed to my intellect at a time when I was struggling with theological and philosophical issues. Then there was a remarkable member of the faculty at Princeton, G. Robert Jacks, who went beyond appealing to the intellect and really tried to develop a “pastor's heart” in his students. He was the only professor who took the time to share with me the prayers that he was saying to God on my behalf. I was very moved by that, and it solidified my sense of calling.

RA: How do you feel about moving to Washington from suburban Chicago?

DL: I'm very excited about it, and so is my family. When I

was in college, I did an internship in the U.S. Senate, and I also came here for three months to work on my senior thesis. So I've lived here for short periods in the past, and I always hoped I'd be able to come back on a more permanent basis. Back then, I was staying at the home of a friend in Northern Virginia, and I used to hitchhike into the District every morning with people who needed an extra rider for the HOV lanes. As a result, I got to meet a lot of people who worked in the federal government, and I remember enjoying those conversations and brief friendships. I really like Washingtonians, in other words. So I have a strong feeling that I'll enjoy the new friendships and relationships I'll make at NPC.

RA: What do you like to do in your spare time, Doug? Do you have a favorite book, movie, TV show?

DL: I love art museums, and I especially like art that explores Christian themes. As an outgrowth of that, I've taken groups from my church to the Chicago Art Institute to look at paintings and talk about the religious issues they raise. My whole family loves museums, so we're really looking forward to exploring all the museums of the Smithsonian. When it comes to books, I enjoy historical fiction, especially James Michener. My favorite movie of all time is “2001: A Space Odyssey.” I'm always struck by how Stanley Kubrick explored the silence of outer space. We live in a society where silence is increasingly rare and its value is under-appreciated. As far as television goes, I'm a big PBS fan. I enjoy documentaries like *Frontline* and the British mysteries and dramas on PBS.

RA: What's the funniest or strangest thing that ever happened to you as a pastor?

DL: That's an easy one. Not long after I got my first position as a pastor, I went to the pulpit one Sunday morning to put my sermon notes on the lectern, and there was a snake waiting for me there! What with the various images and symbolism involving snakes in the Bible, I thought that was oddly appropriate. I have no idea how he got in!

RA: Tell us something that few people know about you.

DL: My very first job in a church was as a sexton, which is pretty much another way of saying janitor. So I've

cleaned the bathrooms, swept the halls, changed the light bulbs. I've done almost every kind of work in a church, and I think that's important if you're in the role of supervising people. It's important to know what they go through every day.

Yet Another Associate Called at NPC!

The Associate Pastor Nominating Committee has been hard at work and is now ready to present another candidate to the congregation. On Sunday, July 9, the candidate will be presented in worship, and a congregational meeting will follow the 11 a.m. service, in which you'll be asked to vote on this pastor's call. Information on the candidate will be sent out prior to the meeting, so watch your mailbox and join us on July 9.

Scholar-in-Residence

*NPC Welcomes Lincoln Scholar
Ron White, September 15 – October 15*

NPC has undertaken a unique arrangement with nationally-known scholar Ron White, who has written extensively on Abraham Lincoln. Ron has been asked not only to teach at NPC on the life and faith of Lincoln, but to spend the bulk of his time extending the church's outreach into the community. He will speak in governmental, educational, and other venues to use his expertise to open opportunities for conversation about faith and its role in shaping the character and the impact of those who lead.



Ron White is a PC(USA) pastor, who is currently Professor of American Intellectual and Religious History at San Francisco Theological Seminary and a Fellow at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. He is a best-selling author and Lincoln scholar best known for *The Eloquent President*, and *Lincoln's Greatest Speech: The Second Inaugural*. He is currently writing a Lincoln biography.

During the early fall, September 12 – October 11, Ron will teach the NPC Wrestler's class on Sunday mornings, teach at Wednesday Night Alive, and preach during NPC's All-Church Retreat weekend. Bruce MacLaury is spearheading the planning of opportunities outside NPC which will be published later in the summer when finalized. It is our prayer and hope that our congregation and others in the Washington area will participate in many of these venues, using them to engage with others in talking about the importance of faith.

SUMMER FINALE FESTIVAL

Sunday, September 3, at 12:15 p.m.

In the Garden

Join the fun on this last weekend as we say "good-bye" to summer and "hello" to our new pastors and staff and their families. Celebrate these joyful transitions with your church family!

Want to get in on the fun? Call Leslie Saum in Congregational Ministries, 202.537.7494, to see how you can get involved.



Hospitality at NPC

We celebrated him; now we have to choose his successor. Yes, we're talking about Bob Rich, National's food service manager. The Hospitality Council has been working to ascertain a cost-effective direction for our food service and has decided to hire a part-time Food Service Manager, who would manage the kitchen with an approved list of caterers. We are confident the new system will work well. We encourage your comments and ideas. The new system should be in place by mid-August.

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