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## **News of the Presbytery of Yukon**

**electronic edition**

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### **As The Body of Christ, We Pray Together**

(Anyone coming to Anchorage for hospital treatment, please contact the Presbytery office if you would like to have a pastoral visit.)

- Rex Okakok and family in the death of his daughter, June.

Dear Melissa,

### **Changing Things Up**

This week marked a major change for the Presbytery of Yukon. April 30 was Jan Burger's last day as administrative assistant, and May 2 marked the first day for Melissa O'Malley to be the new voice and the face that greets you from the presbytery office. To be sure, Melissa actually began on April 12, and Jan has been training her since. Still, April 30 felt like the true boundary moment—a true changing of the guard.

The Personnel Committee and office staff held a retirement party for Jan on her last day. Thirty people gathered in the Fellowship Hall at First Presbyterian Church in Anchorage to celebrate Jan's nine years of service in the presbytery office. There was lunch and prayer and symbolic gifts and stories, as we celebrated Jan's graceful presence in the office, and her faithful work that helped the ministry in so many ways.

One turn of events added an ironic twist to the whole event. The Personnel Committee arranged for a piece of walrus ivory artwork to come from the village of Gambell as a gift for Jan. The gift did not make it by party day! Somehow, this seemed rather humorous, given how many times Jan has made arrangements for

- Vera Kaneshiro
- Angela Larson
- Jimmy Nayakik
- Our military chaplains

- Rev. Ted McGovern
- Rev. Patrick Bracken
- Rev. Kevin Wainwright
- Rev. John Kaiser

## GARAGE SALE



**May 3rd and 4th  
9 am to 4 pm**

**Jewel Lake Parish  
And featuring a delicious  
BAKE SALE on May 4th!!!**

## Thank You!

I would like to personally thank all of you for your very warm welcome to the Presbytery of Yukon! I am excited to be your new Admin Assistant and I look forward to working with all of you in the future.

-Melissa O' Malley

**Position Opening**  
[Chaplain position at the Salvation Army.](#)

Contact Marian Estelle at 907-360-1186 for more

many of us, or for our supplies, to travel only to discover that the weather preempted her best scheduling. Such is life and travel in the Presbytery of Yukon.

Melissa comes to us from Eagle River. She is Southern Baptist, so she is scrambling to learn what Presbyterians mean when they talk about Teaching Elders, Ruling Elders, and other such jargon. However, Melissa wanted a part-time job that would allow her to serve God through God's church and to be home with her kindergarten-age child for a good part of the day. The Presbytery of Yukon administrative assistant position makes a good fit.

However, Melissa was not hired to do exactly the same job Jan has been doing. The Presbytery voted in October to change the job from a 20 hour per week job to 12 hours per week. With this in mind, Melissa's main roll in the presbytery office will be to facilitate communication through appropriate technologies, and to serve as travel hound dog for the presbytery-that's my term, not the personnel committee's :-).

Cutting the Administrative Assistant's hours will mean a number of changes. Probably what will be most noticeable at first will be that Melissa only works three days per week: Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. For those who travel to presbytery, you will also notice that Melissa will not normally be present at face-to-face meetings of presbytery.

All of this will require some adjustment from all of us. For instance, you can still call the presbytery office on Mondays and Wednesdays and leave a message. Sharon or Mary or I will check for messages regularly, so that we can reply to your needs as promptly as we can. However, we ask that you bear with us as we all begin to learn new patterns for working together.

If you get a chance, please give Melissa a call or send an email to welcome her into this work through the Presbytery office. Her email address is the same one Jan has been using: [office@pbyukon.org](mailto:office@pbyukon.org).

Peace,

*Carole E. Harms*

### **\*\*\* Workshop on Conflict Management \*\*\***

**May 10th (7pm - 9pm) & 11th (9am - 3pm)**

#### **Jewel Lake Parish**

The presenter is Rev. James Christensen and this workshop is for ministers, council members, denominational representatives and others who deal with congregational conflict. The workshop is focused on skill development and a case study will guide participants through a process of conflict response. Participants will learn and practice core skills. The cost of the workshop is \$30, which includes the workbook and lunch. We've extended the registration deadline to **Tuesday, May 7th**.

"Having participated in numerous university level workshops on conflict and resolution within the work place and society in general, Rev. Jim Christensen brings a refreshing look on how we can deal with conflict with a Christian perspective. His workbook is full of valuable insights that can be utilized in any conflict I found his timeline instructions very useable and useful. The bonus to the seminar is you get to know Jim better and that is worth the time."

*-Mark Wartes*

Please contact the Presbytery office with any questions or Marjorie Poggas at 907-344-3929 (Poggas@gci.net) to reserve you spot.

### **Presbyterian Women Spring Gathering ---Living with Hope---**

At Immanuel Presbyterian Church  
2311 Pembroke Cir, Anchorage

Friday May 17 (6-9 pm) and Saturday May 18 (9 am - 3 pm)

Topics include: Human Trafficking and Violence to Women with Waverli Rainey and Liz Potter doing presentations



### **A Note From Jan Burger**

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for a wonderful 9 years. I can truly say I have many friends from across the Presbytery. You are all very special to me. Thank you for the sweet words of encouragement that you have given me. Thank you to those who were able to come to the going away party, and to those who sent cards and email sentiments. On behalf of all of you, I was given some fun thank you gifts--such as a float plane representing the many airline reservations I have made for you over the years, and the resting moose on the wings might represent all those times you had to wait for the weather to clear so that you could attend the meeting. I'm going to miss you. But I know the Lord will keep us all in



the palm of his hand and that we will meet again.

Blessings,  
Jan

P.S. Melissa is going to be a superb admin. Call her and introduce yourself to her!

### **The Benches and the Wells**

One sure sign of spring in my hometown was the return of the old men to the benches outside the courthouse. I was never certain where they went in the winter. It was not entirely clear what they did for a living. But they would appear yearly some time after the arrival of the robins and before the trees leafed out.

The men would tell old stories. They knew every bit of gossip in the courthouse. Of course they started most of the rumors themselves. While the daily newspaper might report the facts of a crime, these guys knew all the background, which was helpful, since they were always on the jury or a cousin to someone involved in the case. If you ever wanted to get elected to an office, you had to first curry favor with the bench crowd. There was a certain time in the afternoon when the benches would empty. Anyone sitting there after that was suspect.



In John 4, Jesus stops at Sychar in Samaria. He plops down at Jacob's well at high, hot noon. What follows is the encounter with the Samaritan woman, but first I want to focus on Jesus' actions. He sat by a well with no bucket at the least-visited time of day. What was he thinking?

He could have wanted to get away for some quiet time. He did that often: send the disciples away on an errand in order to just have time to himself for his own thoughts. Or he could have wanted to be there for whatever folk might come out to Sychar's courthouse square at the least social hour of the day. I think the latter. I think this story illustrates an intentional act by Jesus to make himself available to the most vulnerable and least accepted people of that village.

Stories reveal our true selves. Our public story may be that we are the rich young ruler who has much to give up for the gospel. Our internal story may be more like that of the woman at the well: a story that requires us to believe that God can love our unlovely mess.

It is spring now. It's time to get our faith out there. It's time to reveal our real story and be open to where God may want us to be. The benches and wells are waiting.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gradye Parsons".

Rev. Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk  
General Assembly of the  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

### **Certificate in Lay Ministry**

**Whitworth University**

**Sept. 2013 - June 2014**

Now offered **online** as well as **on campus**, the Certificate in Lay Ministry Program is designed to help train, equip, and support men and women to serve more effectively as commissioned lay pastors, Christian-education directors, lay-ministry coordinators,

youth leaders, church administrators, church elders and deacons, church office managers, and in a variety of other paid and unpaid leadership positions in local congregations. Classes are held for 9 months, September - June. Scholarships are available!

[More...](#) about the online course.

[See here](#) for more information about the on campus course.

## **Certificate in Teaching the Bible** (online)

**Sept. 2013 - April 2014**

Church leaders are expected to teach the Bible in various settings with a variety of different constituents. The Certificate in Teaching the Bible Program is designed to give Sunday school teachers, lay ministry leaders and pastors insight into using the Bible more effectively with children, youth and adults. Scholarships are available! [More...](#)

## **Western Christian Educators' Conference**

"Transformed by Hope-Imagining Faith Formation in the 21st Century" is the theme of this year's conference to be held October 14-17, 2013 at Zephyr Point Conference Center on beautiful Lake Tahoe. [more information](#)

### Quick Links

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