

TAMPA BAY E-NEWS

Possibilities for reflection and prayer and other opportunities for thinking and doing good:

- On behalf of the Presbytery of Tampa Bay, you are invited to the Service of Installation of Reverend Claudia Henderson at Forest Hills, Tampa, on Sunday, February 23, at 3:00PM
- The Presbytery office is closed on Monday, February 17, in observance of Presidents Day. Your careful attention is most appreciated.
- Resource Center sales continue on February 13, 20, and 27 from 9:00AM-1:00PM. There will also be a Saturday sale on the 15th of February from 9:00AM-1:00PM. For more information, please contact Sue Moore at the Presbytery office 813-868-4800.
- Looking ahead: the Resource Center sales continue for March on 8, 13, 20, and 27.
- The Tampa Bay area ranks third nationally as one of the worst areas for human trafficking and its effects. Thank you for your generous giving at last week's Presbytery meeting to address ministry needs related to this serious problem.
- "The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.'" (Luke 17:5)

WHO IS OPENING YOUR MAIL?AND OTHER QUESTIONS

Who is opening your mail?

From time to time, the Presbytery office sends mail to each member congregation, often addressing it to the officers of the session: Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer.

What we've noticed from feedback, conversations, and assorted e-mail correspondence is that some of our session officers are not receiving USPS mail addressed to them at their home congregation.

So, this is a friendly reminder to the congregations of the Presbytery: another mailing will be happening soon. Please allow your Moderator, Clerk, and Treasurer to receive and open the mail addressed to them from Tampa Bay Presbytery. We trust that people are receiving information they need from their mailings, which is one reason we send it to ALL the session officers, because we think it models "sharing information," which is important for leadership when it comes to making deci-



sions and building relationships. Thank you.

What will the Regional Commission meetings look like?

At its meeting this past Saturday, the Presbytery agreed to a gentle start to Regional Commission meetings, with the first round scheduled for March 2014, to include fellowship, prayer, and conversation. More information will be provided through e-News next week and in a USPS mailing also. The

schedule for March is:

WEST—March 15 from 8:45AM-11AM at St. Andrews, Dunedin
HILLSBOROUGH—March 22 from 8:45-11AM at Village, Tampa
EAST— March 29 from 8:45AM-11AM at Highlands, Lakeland

Who is my COM liaison for 2014?

Good question. Please watch your USPS mail for this goody and other relevant information to share with the session and congregation.

CRAZY LITTLE THING CALLED LOVE

One of the great saints of the Presbyterian church, the late-Howard Rice, Professor of Theology, Moderator of the General Assembly, says:

The heart of the experience of God is an inner knowing that I am loved, loved beyond my comprehension, beyond my earning or deserving.

And then the professor elaborates:

God is love. The experience of God's love is one that

meets our basic need for love so that we can be free to love others. Spiritual experience is the liberation of the self from preoccupation with itself. It is the beginning of freedom to care about others with abandon. (Reformed Spirituality, pp. 164-66)

At the very darkest and lowest points of his life, and there were many of them, Martin Luther used to write on his slate two Latin words: *Baptizatus Sum*. I am baptized. I know who I am and whose I am.

It was done for many of us before we were even aware of it: carried to the front of the church, held in parents' arms, water spilled over our heads. Tampa Bay Presbyterians: each of you is a child of God, and you belong to Jesus Christ forever.

And even if you are not baptized, it is for you—it is for everyone—to have, to know, to treasure, and to live. "Do not fear . . . I have called you by name, you are mine." Thanks be to God.