



e-News from the Presbytery of Tampa Bay

4704 Kelly Road, Tampa, Florida 33615

2 January 2015

'The Mission of the Presbytery of Tampa Bay is to identify and strengthen leaders so that every congregation makes new and mature disciples of Jesus Christ.'

Hello Presbytery of Tampa Bay,

May the God of Peace embrace us all with his wonderful grace as we begin to live into our future together in 2015. Happy New Year! God has plans for us, as told to us by the prophet Jeremiah "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me" Jeremiah 29:11-14a

There is a rumor that Christmas is over. This is January. But we know that the story of the gospel is just beginning. And in spite of what our church calendars say, this is anything but Ordinary Time! We have a God sized goal tucked into this mission statement of ours. I believe we can make intentional progress. We have untapped potential, really strengths that may have been neglected or discounted. What if we really orient around our strengths? (Please note I did not say orient around our opinions or biases or predispositions).

I pledge to pray daily for clarity and to focus on what we believe God has called us to do. The work will seem overwhelming at times! A friend recently asked me how I will prioritize my time and energy. The task of prioritization will be driven by and toward our mission. To keep clarity and focus, it will be important to allow few distractions. Discipline is necessary to succeed. My questions to myself every day will be, 'Where am I, and where does God want me to be? What should I be doing to get there?'

Friends, we are in this together. As the body of Christ let us work with a new sense of purpose. Keeping our lives in focus, consciously aligning actions, thoughts, and attitudes to be congruent with our collective purpose--our mission--our vision---that is essential to fulfilling what God would have us do and be. Our work should be more channeled, and less random; more specific and targeted and less 'spray and pray'.

The season of rest following Advent is short! I do hope the new year brings all of us a renewed sense of hope and joy in believing that God has a fruitful future for our church. Get some rest! And then prepare for this Anything But Ordinary Time!

God's Grace and Peace,
Patrice

Looking to the New Year

Sunday, 4 January 2015

Our newest member congregation, Springwater Church of Brandon, will be celebrating its tenth anniversary as a fellowship and its *first services for the ordination and installation of elders and deacons*: 5 p.m. FPC, Brandon is located at 121 Carver Avenue, Brandon 33510.

Thursday, 8 January 2015, 6:30 p.m.

The Vice Moderator of our PCUSA General Assembly is coming to Tampa Bay Presbytery. Special Worship Service, Q and A., and refreshments at Hope, Winter Haven (2110 Cypress Gardens Blvd., Winter Haven 33884)

Rev. Larissa Kwong Abazia is the youngest pastor to serve in this important capacity. She was elected by an overwhelming majority at last summer's General Assembly meeting in Detroit. Rev. Abazia is pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Forest Hill, Queens NY, a congregation that has over 25 different nationalities. She graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary with the Watermulder Award for Church Leadership.

Saturdays, 24 and 31 January 2015

Cokesbury's VBS Showcase previews for Tampa Bay. 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

24th: Skycrest UMC (92045 Drew Street, Clearwater 33765)

31st: South Shore UMC (11525 Big Bend Road, Riverview 33579)

RSVP Lionel Trujillo (727 216 6208).

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Temporary Stated Clerk

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