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Presbytery of the Cascades

Stated Clerk Blasts US Supreme Court’s Decision on Affirmative Action

J. Herbert Nelson says racial equity in the US just took several major steps backward

LOUISVILLE

The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) used his last day in office to weigh in on the recent U.S. Supreme Court affirmative action ruling. The Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II says the high court’s decision announced Thursday, (June 29) to bar colleges and universities from considering race as a specific bias for admission “has set racial equity in the U.S. back by decades.”

The decision grew out of a lawsuit filed against Harvard University and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill over their use of race-conscious admissions, arguing that equal standards and merits should be the main considerations.



The Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson

Rev. Dr. Nelson’s Full Statement:

For years, I worked across the street from the U.S. Supreme Court with the PC(USA)’s [Office of Public Witness](#), but I have never felt the gut punch that I have felt in the last year between its decision in 2022 to toss out *Roe v. Wade* and the news on Thursday regarding affirmative action. This conservative-dominated panel has set racial equity in the U.S. back by decades.

The high court’s decision to no longer consider race as a factor for granting admission to colleges and universities will drastically impact students of color in their pursuit of higher education. The court’s majority opinion can sugarcoat its decision any way it wants, but the fact remains that this is a direct slap in the face for racial justice in this country.

Affirmative action opened the doors for thousands of students of color over the years who had the drive, grades, and passion for learning, but lacked the financial resources and influence to get into higher level schools. It helped level the playing field for many who have later excelled as lawyers, corporate executives, doctors, and lawmakers.

Now universities and colleges across the country will be faced with the challenge of finding other ways to help Black and Latino students reach their scholastic goals. Many experts say the

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“In the beginning, God Created...”

Creation care: How will the Presbyterian Church respond to climate change? As we experience the hottest summer months in Earth’s history, what actions can we each take.

Click [here](#) for a look at how our denomination responds.

Omnibus

Omnibus is published twelve times a year by the Presbytery of the Cascades for distribution to churches and individuals.

Omnibus welcomes news and views of all the churches of Presbytery and all its readers. Send all communications to Kathleen Waugh, *Omnibus* editor, Presbytery of the Cascades, 245 S. Bancroft St., Suite D, Portland, Oregon. Email: kwaugh8@outlook.com

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decision could result in a significant drop in the number of students of color attending select universities and colleges around the country.

These discriminatory decisions and actions send us back to a nation that we have been trying for years to move away from. It breaks the backbone of diversity, thought, and the possibility of building a more diverse and committed society. It prevents us from building a more perfect union that sees all individuals as potential leaders and what this nation could become if done the right way.

I have had the great honor of serving this denomination for many years, an opportunity I would not have had if not for the education and training I received at some of the finest institutions in the country. I grieve for those who seek the same opportunities and pray that our leaders will change the course set by these unfair decisions and right the wrongs we are seeing.

In God’s Mercy,
J. Herbert Nelson, II
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)



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ViewPoints

By Paul Belz-Templeman, Stated Clerk, Presbytery of the Cascades



The Presbytery of the Cascades is seeking Minister of the Word and Sacrament and Ruling Elder applicants to serve as commissioners to the 226th General Assembly. We are also seeking young adults (ages 18-23) to serve as Advisory Delegates (YAADs). This is an opportunity to help the larger church learn, discern, and engage in the mission Christ is calling us to do.

What is the General Assembly (GA)?

It is Presbyterians together discerning what the Spirit is saying to the churches. For the upcoming GA in 2024, commissioners will be busy with online (Zoom) committee meetings from June 25-27, 2024, then travel to Salt Lake City, Utah, for the June 29 - July 4, 2024. It's a mix of both in-person and online. Post GA service in 2024-25 includes interpreting the actions of the General Assembly to the presbytery and its congregations and advising the presbytery on how to vote on any proposed amendments to the PC(USA) Constitution.

What do commissioners say about their service?

"It connected me more fully to the global church. Presbyterians are doing amazing things that impact the whole world. Being part of that was an inspiring experience to my local faith walk."

"A really fun, challenging, energizing, sleep deprived, spiritually uplifting, informative week."

"I found new ideas for ministry."

How do I become a commissioner?

The nomination process is by application. Download your application today and return it by September 18, 2023, to be considered as a nominee for election at the November 2023, Stated Presbytery Meeting.

Minister of Word and Sacrament Apply by [CLICKING HERE](#)

Young Adults Apply by [CLICKING HERE](#)

Ruling Elders Apply by [CLICKING HERE](#)



There's a Place for You!

The nominating committee encourages your participation on presbytery committees. Please take this opportunity to suggest yourself or someone you would recommend for service on a committee or taskforce in the presbytery. We will use this information to update our committee and nomination database. Interested? Click [here](#) to nominate yourself or someone you know.

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A Church by Any Other Name...

By Mike Hubbard, Central/South Regions Reporter

The “Presbyterian Church of the Siuslaw” in Florence, Oregon, will soon be a thing of the past—more to the point, the name will be. In the meantime, the building and grounds, the congregation, and Pastor Greg Wood will continue to minister to the community, worship in Spirit and in Truth, and fulfill the Great Ends of the Church—all to the glory of the God. So, why the name change?

The simple answer? Because the Siuslaw Tribe asked them to do so. From the Siuslaw’s standpoint, the request made perfect sense, as the tribe doesn’t have an association with any particular church. Following the most basic application of semantics, the current name implies an affiliation with the tribe, as, for example, the “Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland.” So, on July 16, 2023, the congregation voted to change their name to, "**Presbyterian Community Church.**"



For the congregation, changing their name was a matter of doing the next right thing. Their action adds substance to Cascades’ policy of publicly stated land acknowledgements. Reading a formal statement at the beginning of a Stated Meeting is a good thing, but it doesn’t cost us anything. Renaming a church does. Yet at no time did the members feel the request was out of line. Pastor Greg noted that there was vigorous discussion, not about changing the name, all seemed in agreement that not offending our native neighbors was a good idea.”

The vigorous discussion involved finding a name that describes who they are, what they do, and within what context. They are solidly PC(USA), so “Presbyterian” was a no-brainer; their new name would reflect that affiliation. And, simple though it sounds, they are a church, not a community organization or helping agency.

It is the use of “community” that provides the context for what and where they do what they do: Pastor Greg on the use of that word “community:”

“For us, this is more than semantics. We are using this to commit or recommit ourselves to ministry in the community. That motion was approved with the understanding that we are pledging to do more than just loan out our building to community groups (we have about 12 groups that meet here monthly, and many, many more that use our building on an infrequent basis).”

Their commitment to the community focuses on several fronts. They sponsor bullying and suicide prevention initiatives through the public school. They encourage volunteerism in the community and have begun a monthly focus on local nonprofit groups working in West Lane County.



*First Step RV’s on Church Property
Allowing for Transitional Housing*

For the last five years, “First Step – Florence,” has had three RVs parked on the church’s property. During that time, the nonprofit organization, whose mission is to provide transitional housing services to families in Western Lane County, has assisted 30 families. This is truly a hands-on ministry. Pastor Greg states: “The congregation has enthusiastically welcomed this ministry onto the property and worked with the staff and volunteers of First Step to provide a safe place for the important work that First Step is doing. Several Church

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Programs for all Ages Reach Out to the Community

By Pat Berger, Northeast Region Reporter

Life is moving right along at **Mt. Scott Park, Portland!** Pastor Sue Van Stelle reports that they regularly have about 20 or so in worship in person in their sanctuary, plus 20 or so online and by telephone.



Coming up soon on their calendar is Compassion Camp. They are not publicizing it as Vacation Church School (VCS), although it will take the place of that this summer and will have some of the same program elements. They have done VCS in the past, but not for several years. This year's gathering will begin on August 7, and is for children in grades K-5.

Materials they are using are from a group called Illustrated Ministries. This year, they will start with a small meal for each session. Then there will be a gathering time with music, a story, recreation, a time for creative arts, and then gathering again.

Stories and conversations will focus on each one having compassion for themselves and for others. They will be sure that those in attendance realize the importance of having compassion for themselves before they can be of assistance to others.

In the past, they have had many attendees from the neighborhood as well as from the congregation. They plan for 20 or so to come -- and who knows?!

Beginning again in the fall will be GriefShare. Pastor Sue and one of the Elders at the church lead this video program, which emphasizes peer support. There are GriefShare programs all around the Portland area. It is multi-denominational. Those who come are from Mt. Scott Park, from other churches, and from no church background at all.

Pastor Sue lets attendees know that the materials are "kind of preachy" and that it is okay if they are not! Most who come have some faith background. They meet weekly beginning September 7, from 6:30 - 8 p.m. So far, there have been eight to ten people in each group.

Each of the videos has a topic dealing with the grief process. The group watches the video, discusses provided questions, and there is time for sharing their own experiences.

They finish with a time for refreshments. A volunteer bakes for each of their meetings. It is a 13-week program which they ran twice last year.

All of the Portland Urban Network (PUN) churches know about this offering, and there is a website. Pastor Sue said that when they put up the website last year, within an hour they had their first person sign up to come!

And then, there is their Little Free Health Library, out in the front of the church. It began, in January of 2021, as just health supplies: feminine hygiene products, toothbrushes and toothpaste, deodorant, etc. Then one day someone left a book! It transitioned; now they have one shelf of health products and one shelf of books, and things move in and out pretty rapidly.

Much is happening in this space in our presbytery! Best wishes, Mt. Scott Park, for your ministries!

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~ *Transitions* ~

New Pastors

- Rev. LaVonne Alexander, from Nevada Presbytery will begin pastoring at **First, Mill City** on August 1.

Installations

- Beth Putney was ordained at Columbia PC, Vancouver on Sunday, July 9.
- The Rev. Liz Leavitt was installed at Rose City Park PC on July 23, 2023

Pastoral Changes:

- The Rev. Lindsey Groves is now an Associate Supply Pastor at Westminster, Portland
- Sunday, July 9 was Rev. Rick Ribiero's last Sunday at Warm Springs Presbyterian.
- The Rev. Jeff Sievert is now preaching at Mt. Tabor



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members serve on the Board of Directors and many more are regular contributors.”

Using Zoom, they extend their worship to a local senior housing facility so residents can worship in their common room. They provide bulletins, hymnals, and on Communion Sundays, an elder takes the elements for communion there, allowing all to celebrate this sacrament as one family.

As Florence grows, church members are exploring several ways to reach out to their new neighbors. To their immediate south, Northwest Housing Alternatives is building 86 units of low-income housing. Members of the congregation are actively looking for ways to offer their resources to the residents. When the first residents move in, Presbyterian Community Church will be ready to engage them.

While all of the above describes a church that seeks to serve their community, what spiritual food sustains these active members? What’s it like to worship in their bright airy sanctuary, to snack and visit in their roomy fellowship hall after the service? To start with, not all the greeters walk on two legs. Greeter dogs, Holly and Lola, outfitted with their very own name scarves, their tails wagging, make everyone who walks through the doors feel welcome—likewise, the two-legged ones. The order of worship is solidly in the Presbyterian tradition, with a slightly lighter touch. The musicianship is well done, singing is lively, with everyone joining in.



The friendly atmosphere continues well after the benediction as folks gather around tables with coffee and snacks. Pastor Greg’s word sum up a visitor’s experience:

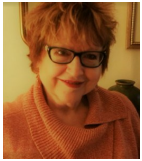
“The newly renamed Presbyterian Community Church would confess that our greatest joys are worship and fellowship. Since a majority of members are transplants to Florence, we highly prize welcoming the stranger and spending time to get to know each other.”

If your Sunday travels take you through Florence, Oregon, consider paying these good folks a visit. And say “hi” to Holly and Lola.

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Tigard Project: Feeding the Hungry and Building Community

By Dianna Weston, Northwest Region Reporter



*Please join us in welcoming Dianna Weston, our new Northwest Region reporter for the Omnibus. Dianna serves **Rise Church, Tigard** as an elder and as chair of Rise's Outreach and Communications Committee. She has a background in marketing communications in both for profit and non-profit organizations and loves to share inspirational stories.*

Rise, Tigard's Charmine Rone always knew there was hunger and need in the world, but it did not become personal for her until she returned to teaching after staying home with her children for 13 years. "When I returned to teaching Tigard was a pretty affluent area. Even so, some students lacked basic necessities."

In the late nineties while she was teaching at Fowler Middle School, a student needed shoes, and his family could not afford any. He had large feet for a seventh grader, size 12. A counselor approached the parents of a family whose third son was also a student at Fowler that year. All the boys in the family were tall, and the counselor figured that one of the older boys had a pair of size twelve shoes that he no longer wore. Instead of handing down worn shoes, that generous family purchased a brand-new pair of shoes for the student. The counselor reported that the student burst into tears when she gave him the shoes. It was the first pair of new shoes he had ever owned. For 13 years he had been putting his feet into other people's worn-out shoes.

She had other students in need. Some went home to care for younger siblings and cook dinner for the family every day, because both parents worked multiple jobs to pay the rent and purchase necessities. Those students had to grow up too fast, and they did not have a chance to work on their schoolwork. A couple of students frequently missed school because they were in severe mouth pain with decayed teeth and their families could not afford visits to the dentist. Another student owned two shirts and two pairs of jeans. He wore one shirt and jeans for a week; then he wore the second shirt and jeans for a week. He alternated his two outfits all year long.

As years passed, she saw more need. Tigard became less affluent, and a greater percentage of students were from families struggling to get by. She had students who were homeless and rode public buses for more than an hour each way to get to school. Free school meals helped them survive.

Rone acknowledges that families need much more than food. But food is crucial; a hungry mind struggles to learn. Also, it is logistically easier to provide non-perishable food than shoes that fit or dental care. Free food allows more of the family's resources to go to other needs, such as heat, clothes, or rent.

Fast forward several years and as a member of Rise Church in Tigard, Rone spearheaded the Tigard Food Project in support of Rise's mission to lift its community. Modeled after other "green bag" projects in Portland and around Oregon and 10 additional states, the hope is to help Rise's community provide a steady supply of food for the local food pantries.

"Having adequate food lets families concentrate on other needs and move forward in their lives," says Rone. "Additionally, I hope that when neighbors come together to donate food in the organized manner of the Tigard Food Project, people will become better acquainted, and our community will thrive." Here is how it works:

Once every two months Rise and other involved community members bring in their distinctive green Tigard Food Project bags filled with non-perishable food. Volunteers weigh and distribute the bounty to local food banks.

Donating food this way is easy because it is on a regular schedule. Food donors get in the habit, and pantries can count on a predictable flow of food. The pantries can also communicate what they need most, which allows them to better meet people's needs with a healthy variety of food.

The Tigard Food Project is about more than sharing food with our neighbors, though that is a major part of its mission. It is also about building a stronger and more positive community.

For more information on the Tigard Food Project, visit <https://tigardfoodproject.org/>.

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Follow Me: Biblical Practices for Faithful Living

(Editor's Note: The presbyterian denomination has a long and respected tradition offering high quality educational curriculum for all ages. "Follow Me" continues the tradition. Below are highlights of this curriculum. Do click [here](#), though, to explore all the dimensions this material offers.)

Whether you are a small congregation that can only offer one educational opportunity that includes all ages of participants or a larger congregation that has individual classes for each age group, PCUSA's *Follow Me*, has just the right material for you. Keeping close to its reformed traditions, this twenty-seven-unit curriculum is based on practices Jesus did and taught us to do as faithful followers.

"We're using the congregational guides to help us plan 'Breakfast Worship' at our church. I just love it! I wish we had enough people to use this curriculum in its entirety. But baby steps. We have a little group of about 15 that includes a four-month old – people in their 70s. We have no pastor at our church right now. This gives us solid theology with creative ways to worship and connect."—Linnea Williams, Worship Planning Team Member, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Sherman, TX

Written for people of all ages who wish to live out their faith, this curriculum examines where these practices are found in the Bible and how they have been used in Christian faith then and now. *Follow Me* not only has individual age components for each unit, but you can also save money with small-scale and large-scale packages. If your congregation is small but still covers many age ranges, consider using only the Congregational Guide to still have a solid program for everyone there.

This year, the last of the nine major themes are introduced. They are:

Celebrate Communion

Throughout this unit, participants will learn that communion is a physical act, a spiritual gift, and a call for a pattern for living, in which we receive the gifts of God, give thanks, break them open, and share them with one another and the world. The four dimensions of the practice include: give thanks, share meals, be fed, and feed others

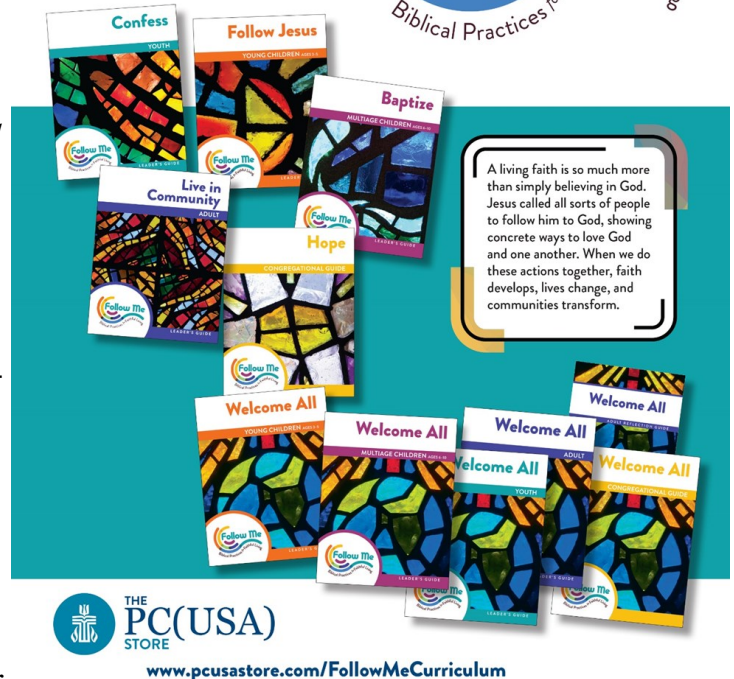
Lament

Through studying this practice, participants will learn how the laments in the Old Testament express raw emotion, but also confidence that God is listening and will eventually set things right. While much of American culture does not encourage lament, there can be healing. This unit focuses on four practices in the ritual of lament, including name wounds, weep and wail, remember the crucified one, and dance between lament and hope.

Cross Borders

This practice shows how we, as followers of Jesus, are pushed, pulled, invited, and commanded by God to embrace the fullness of humanity. This unit focuses on four aspects of crossing borders: leave your comfort zone, embrace relationships, challenge exclusion, and speak God's language of love.

INTRODUCING
A NEW CURRICULUM
FOR YOUR WHOLE
CHURCH





Resources help Ministry and Mission

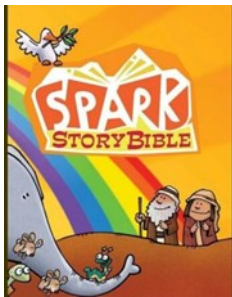


The website, *Opening Doors to Discipleship* began as an ecumenical partnership between five

Reformed denominations that developed a training and learning website for church leaders. In 2019, the Association of Partners in Christian Education (APCE) became stewards of the website and decided to update and redesign it. We recognize that contemporary Christian Education is at its best when we listen to diverse voices, collaborate with one another, and share our collective wisdom.

The mission of the *Opening Doors to Discipleship* website is to support the faith journey of people seeking to follow Jesus today as leaders and learners in Christian community.

In addition to modules offering leadership training in reformed tradition and educational practices, one can explore more on such topics as disability inclusion for ministry, faith formation with older adults, intergenerational ministry and more. Click [here](#) to explore this website further.



This children's bible storybook is reviewed by Jo Wiersema and Amy Pagliarella for *Outlook Magazine*. they note:

Jo: The *Spark Story Bible* by Patti Thisted Arthur... it is comprehensive, especially with regard to the Hebrew Bible. It covers a good portion of stories

that might not be in your standard Sunday School lessons or even part of the lectionary.

Amy: I absolutely agree. My experience with the *Spark Story Bible* is as something to read aloud. I used this with my own children when they were little, and we would give this as a gift to our kindergarteners at the church where I served. When my kids were little, I remember my son would say, "Oh, let's read a story about that silly guy who eats bugs" because he remembered the picture of John the Baptist as being really goofy.

Amy: There's a lot in here that just lends itself to storytelling, which is what I love. The pictures are also very accessible to kids. When you're reading

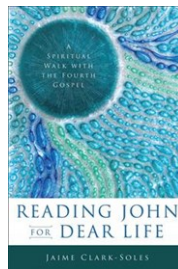
with very young children, you're not only reading what's on the page, but you're also stopping to discuss it with them.

They even have the little guy Squiggles who's this little, lively caterpillar on every page... It's something that draws very young children in and makes them part of the story.

Jo: The thing I'll note about Squiggles is the emotions he conveys throughout each story. You can see that he's scared the Egyptians are coming to the Red Sea. He's excited Mary gets to see Jesus. The kids know what kind of story this is going to be based on what they see with Squiggles.

Amy: It cues kids on how to react, but it also invites them to share their emotions: How would you feel? Would you be scared? What would you do?

For the whole article, click [here](#).



Jaime Clark-Soles takes readers on a dynamic journey deep into the heart of John in this lively reading of the Fourth Gospel. *Reading John for Dear Life* is not simply a commentary but a spiritual companion to be read alongside the Bible.

Clark-Soles provides important historical and literary insights while illuminating the dramatic characters in John and emphasizing the Gospel's unique themes and symbols. Her engaging writing style will generate enthusiasm and investment in John's message.

Readers will also appreciate the addition of prayers as well as questions for individual study and/or group discussion. This excellent guide will enrich our spiritual journeys while opening ourselves up to Jesus through the words, stories, questions, symbols, and characters we encounter in John's Gospel.

Click [here](#) for more information.

Do you have a book, a Bible Study, a resource that has helped you in your ministry? Please share. Send to editor,

Kathleen Waugh at

omnibus@cascadespresbytery.org

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Tuesday, August 1

John Ailstock, granted Honorably Retired status this day, 2012

Wednesday, August 2

Barry Heath, granted Honorably Retired status this month, 2009

Thursday, August 3

First Presbyterian Church, Roseburg -- chartered this day, 1873

Friday, August 4

Ken Henry, ordained this month in 1988 and serving at Tualatin PC as Interim Pastor

Saturday, August 5

The Rev. Stephen Dietrich, Cascades Minister serving as a chaplain in Springfield, OR

Sunday, August 6

Cherie Elliott - Administrative Manager, Presbytery of the Cascades

Monday, August 7

Jay Dee Conrad, granted Honorably Retired status this month, 2003

Tuesday, August 8

A. Michael Brown, granted Honorably Retired status this day, 2012

Wednesday, August 9

Aleida Jernigan, granted Honorably Retired status this month, 2013

Thursday, August 10

Carol Swanson, granted Honorably Retired status this month, 2010

Friday, August 11

John Pierce, granted Honorably Retired status this month, 2007

Saturday, August 12

Del Burnett, Honorably Retired from Salem First in 2020

Sunday, August 13

Derek Richman, Interim at Large

Monday, August 14

Rachel Stramel, Brighten Hospice Chaplain

Tuesday, August 15

Beverly Crow, granted Honorably Retired status this day, 2007

Wednesday, August 16

Bradley Busiek, installed as Pastor, Smith Memorial Presbyterian Church, Fairview, this day, 2015

Thursday, August 17

Kathy Waugh, Omnibus editor

Friday, August 18

Bruce Cameron, granted Honorably Retired status this month, 2013

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Saturday, August 19

Spencer Parks, installed as Associate Pastor of Conference Ministries/Menucha Executive Director, First Presbyterian Church, Portland, this month, 2004

Sunday, August 20

Ainsley Herrick, Member at Large

Monday, August 21

Geordie Ziegler, Ordained in 1999, Chaplain at Peace Health Medical SW Washington

Tuesday, August 22

Commission on Ministry -- Central Region, Mike Hachquet, Chair, and members

Wednesday, August 23

Susan Grewe, ordained this day, 1987, now Honorably Retired and granted Pastor Emerita Status

Thursday, August 24

Lorraine Stuart, granted Honorably Retired status this month, 2011

Friday, August 25

Joan Miller, Pastor at Calvary Presbyterian Church, PDX

Saturday, August 26

Scott Dalgarno, Pastor at Southminster PC, Beaverton, OR

Monday, August 28

First Presbyterian Church, Ashland -- chartered this day, 1875

Tuesday, August 29

First Presbyterian Church, Phoenix -- chartered this day, 1875

Wednesday, August 30

Gordon McClellan, ordained this day, 19

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