

ARMSS

Association of Retired Ministers, Their Spouses or Survivors

Quarterly Newsletter

July 2011

Volume 16, Issue 2

CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS – ARMSS & POAMN

October 11-14, 2011

by Ellen Davis



Winter and spring are behind us. Summer heat makes it hard to imagine the beauty of fall, but let me say San Antonio in the fall sounds wonderful. The brochure in the center of this ARMSS newsletter provides an overview of the opportunities available to you as a participant,

but we'd like to point out two specifically that are new and important parts of the convention. At your request, we are offering a retirement seminar pre-convention (Monday, October 10 through noon Tuesday, October 11) for retirees only. Steven Fleming, of the Board of Pensions will lead this workshop in which you will get an update on Board services, Medicare, and the Board's Medicare Supplement Plan as well as exploring options for retirement housing, learn more about long-term care insurance and managing your finances in retirement.

Also available during the convention a workshop on retirement planning for those not yet retired will offer opportunity to consider issues that relate to healthy retirement planning physically, financially and emotionally. This workshop will also be provided by Board of Pension leadership.

And you won't want to miss a word of Keynote speaker Rev. Dr. Cynthia Rigby's presentations "Being Alive in a Crazy Busy World." If you've never heard Dr. Rigby, you are in for a meaningful and lively discussion of issues in this time of change both within our denomination and in the world in which we find ourselves in mission and ministry.

Top that all off with a beautiful setting with the renowned Texas hospitality in which to celebrate 15 years of ARMSS ministry, and you can't go wrong in making your reservation today. See you in San Antonio in October!

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ARMSS Quarterly Newsletter

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www.armss.org

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Bill Gannaway

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF ARMSS

“Laughter Steels Us for Life”

When I was installed as pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Topeka KS, I asked my father to give the “Charge to the Pastor”. In that charge, he said something that took me by surprise: “I hope you believe now and always in a God who is free enough to do the unexpected, to break through the routines and laugh at the maps we bind him by.”

But Dad, I thought, we are about serious business here tonight; this is no laughing matter. We are engaged in a service of installation which is the result of over a year of serious hard work by a pulpit nominating committee as well as a prayerful and thoughtful process on my part in accepting this call. And my father said in essence: “It’s really a laughing matter.” He continued on to say, “If you will let the air or wind of the Spirit blow through your ministry in this place, all the plans you have for this pastorate and the maps you have drawn up, the expectations you have nurtured, well, God is now laughing about those things because God has plans and designs that are going to take you and this church in an

altogether different direction.” My father was right. As Mark Twain said, he was surprised at how smart his father had become when he (Twain) became an adult.

At the time of my installation, I never even thought about spending over a quarter of a century in Topeka at Westminster. At that time I was thinking more about a pastorate of around five years and then moving on to another field of ministry. At that time, I never envisioned getting involved in a major renovation project of that church building and at the same time raising funds for the General Mission of the PCUSA on a 3/1 ratio of local mission to general mission. At that time I had no vision of the depth of fellowship which I would enjoy with the people of that congregation during over twenty six years of ministry sharing in their joys and sorrows, weddings and divorces, failures and successes, baptisms and funerals. It was a great ride!

God does have a sense of humor and has plans and designs for us that we never expect. I should not have been surprised, because the Bible speaks of God as one who laughs. God is a joyous being, a happy being and always enjoys a good joke. The Psalmist sang; “God sits in the heavens and laughs.” (Ps. 2:4) God even “laughs at the

wicked.” (Ps. 37:13) God knows that ultimately goodness will triumph over evil. According to Eugene O’Neal in his play, “Lazarus Laughed” we can even laugh at death as the crowd shouts: “Laugh! Laugh! Death is dead! There is only laughter.”

We must seem humorous to God, the way we take ourselves and our problems so seriously. Perhaps if we can learn to trust in God more, we will learn to see ourselves and our problems in light of God’s eternal comedy and even learn to laugh at ourselves.

A Topeka playwright and actor wrote a review of a play in our local paper and used that title that I started out with, “Laughter Steels Us for Life”, he said; “Comedy is the gift that makes life’s sad moments bearable.”

Bill Gannaway

PRAYER FOR AGING

‘Tis sweet to grow old
in the fear of the Lord,
As life’s shadows longer creep.
Till our steps grow slow
and our sun swings low,
He gives his beloved sleep.

-- John Wesley

ARMSS VISIT TO CUBA

by Dean Lewis

By invitation of the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba (IRPC), ARMSS members will travel to Cuba February 7-20, 2012 (around 12 days). This visit is a follow-up of highly successful ARMSS visits of November 2006, February 2009 and November 2010 and again is sponsored by the Presbyterian Church. The Rev. Muriel Miller, pastor of Evergreen Presbyterian Church, Chicago and the Rev. Dean H. Lewis, Executive Secretary of the Presbyterian Cuba Connection and an ARMSS member will lead the visit. The program will include visits in all three Cuban presbyteries as well as the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Matanzas, the Christian Center for Reflection and Dialog, the Presbyterian Camp and Conference Center and the National Presbyterian Museum.

Each participant is asked to give or raise at least \$500 (\$750/couple) for a Mission Gift for the IPRC. This gift will go to provide support for the congregations in each presbytery.

Details:

(1) The cost will be approximately \$1,900 - \$2,000 which will cover all expenses from Miami, including the hotel cost there, RT airfare to Havana and all

expenses in Cuba. Participants are responsible for travel to and from home to Miami.

- (2) Your passport must be valid at least six months after the February departure from Havana - that is, at least until mid-August 2012.
- (3) Your "Declaration of Interest" should be received by August 1, 2011, with final registration and first payment due by September 15, 2011. This is due to the time required for license and visa processes of the United States and Cuba.
- (4) Though the program will not include strenuous activities, travel and accommodations in Cuba can be uncomfortable by U.S. standards.

"Declaration of Interest" forms should be filled out for each participant and do not constitute a firm commitment to the visit. Forms may be obtained from Dean Lewis at: deanlewis6299@windstream.net.

The number of participants is limited so an early expression of interest is advisable. Four have already signed up for this mission trip.

Visit our new website at:
www.armss.org
 See more details on page 4.

ARMSS Cuban Mission

ARMSS has just sent another \$2,000 for the shipment of theological books in Spanish to the Matanzas Reformed/Presbyterian Seminary in Cuba. The books are supplied by the International Book Charities, but transportation costs are the responsibility of ARMSS. It costs around \$3,000 to ship the books by mail because of the U.S. embargo; the books must first be shipped to Canada before they are sent on to the Seminary. Rather than mail the books, ARMSS cooperates with the Cuban Connection on an alternate way to ship the books and that is by bus through Mexico which is then sent by ship on to Cuba. ARMSS sent \$1,000 in January to help purchase a bus for Central Presbytery in Cuba which will transport the bus load of books to the Seminary. The bus will then be given to the Central Presbytery for much needed transportation activities in Central Presbytery. Central operates a camp for children and youth and the bus can be used for a number of other presbytery activities. Central Presbytery is the most remote and needy presbytery in Cuba. The bus can well be used. ARMSS feels that it is better stewardship to spend \$3,000 in this way rather than on postage.

A NEW MINISTRY FOR ME –

AND MAYBE FOR YOU, TOO!

by Alden R. Hickman, H.R.

After retiring for the 7th time here in Topeka, KS, I discovered a new form of ministry: Providing FREE RX discount cards to people without RX insurance coverage.

Thankfully, those of us on the PCUSA Pension Plan have excellent coverage for our medical needs. But all around you are thousands of people without prescription drug coverage. A local M.D. told me that over 25% of written prescriptions are never filled – too expensive!

I learned that these “Community Assistance Program (CAP)” cards make it possible to receive discounts on Prescriptions – 15% on name-brands and 55% on generics. So I became a Community Outreach Coordinator for the “CAP” program.

I am working with churches, rescue missions, mental health facilities, clinics, retirement homes, motels, fast food stores, and individuals. I can provide you with all the cards you need at no cost (maybe a little postage if you need more than 100) and you can bless others by giving them a card. A friend of mine without insurance took her prescription to a participating pharmacy – was told the cost would be \$138 – but when she gave them her card it dropped to \$34.

If you visit www.aprxprogram.org/arh you can print a card for yourself and find locations of participating pharmacies, discounted prices for prescriptions, and even find an option for people who can't pay for their medications even with a discount card.

These are “bearer” cards which means they are immediately usable and in fact can be used by other people, too. All FDA-approved brand and generic prescription medications are covered.

So - where you live - are there churches, homes, non-profits that serve folks who would benefit from these cards?

For more details contact me at arh1952@cox.net

**ARMSS
HAS ITS
OWN NEW
WEBSITE**



ARMSS recently partnered with psdm, Inc. out of Albany, GA to create its own website. You can find up-to-date information about ARMSS at: www.armss.org. There you are able to access information about the conference, Presbytery Representatives, newsletters, membership only info, and much more! Log on today and see what's new with ARMSS. If you are a member of ARMSS, join the Members Only section by setting up your

account when you create a user sign-in and password.

ARMSS IS GOING GREEN!

Over the next year, ARMSS will be looking at ways to become better stewards of both our environmental and economical resources. One way we are proposing to be more responsible to our ARMSS membership and newsletter readership is by having the option of receiving an electronic newsletter if you so choose. The newsletter will be available on-line for download at our ARMSS web page, or you can opt to receive a PDF file of the newsletter emailed to you. You will also still have the option of receiving a hard copy of the newsletter mailed to you, by letting us know this is the way you would like to continue to receive your newsletter. So when you renew your ARMSS membership or become a new ARMSS member for 2011, please indicate on your membership form how you would like to continue to receive your newsletter by checking the appropriate box. You can also contact Ginny by email at: gnyhuis@frontier.com or by mailing your request to: ARMSS, P.O. Box 70311, Oostburg WI 53070.

RECYCLED MINISTRY

by Richard Huggins

Retirement from “active ministry” was the phrase I heard when the mantle of Honorable Retirement was given me by The Presbytery of Tampa Bay in 2003. At the same time I retired from doing ministry as Development Officer in Florida for Thornwell Home. I had been married a second time for a year after my first wife of 41 years died of cancer. Needless to say, it had been a very emotional sequence of events when I told Barbara that I was ready to just take it easy. That catch phrase didn’t last long!

Before a month had passed I was doing Interim Ministry in the a nearby town of Auburndale, FL for a congregation that had gone through a terrible pastoral situation. It took very little time for me to realize that one never retires from pastoral service. My sense of call was awakened anew. I served that church for 32 months which is rather long in interim service, but it was a time to be cherished perhaps more from my perspective than theirs. It was time to study, brood, experiment, and grow my pastoral skills in ways I never thought about when involved in development work.

In this same time span I also began to strengthen a Drama Ministry and work as the Older Adult Coordinator for First Presbyterian in Lakeland, FL. I was busy but in all cases on a

“part time” basis. Believe me, the part time seemed rather full according to my new wife who was now learning to be the “preachers wife” for two churches. In all cases I was trying to recycle as much of my past as possible. It was very futile! The one true bit of ministry that proved worthwhile was my love of people and my joy in serving our lord. New talents and new time management and new ways of looking at the church were now in the forefront of my life.

I am now in my fifth year as a Stated Supply for the McLeod Memorial PC in Bartow, FL and still serving as Coordinator for Older Adult Ministry at First Church In Lakeland. The outlook for this small church given me by Presbytery when I began was very gloomy. Barbara remarked after our first Sunday, “Do you think they have a chance?” I said, “We shall see!” I really wasn't sure of what lay ahead but one thing was certain, they believed in their future even if Presbytery didn't!

The past four years have been exciting. We have experienced growth in numbers, in trying new programs, in growing our mission giving, and in physical improvements. We've painted, repaired, and renovated our Fellowship Hall. We improved the former Manse for church offices and study space, installed a new sound system, and renewed our Education

program which in turn created a Youth Program. Our VBS is now undergoing a fourth year of change because we felt the need to expand Adult studies in order for the entire family to share in study and fellowship. Our Session Retreats (now in their 5th year) are exciting and vital. We've learned to project our future because we have refreshed our sense of mission in and beyond ourselves. While pastoral work has helped me grow in ministry, I am also involved in the larger community. I serve on the Democratic Executive Committee, and on the Board of HOPE Now a transitional ministry for prisoners. I have also found challenge and enrichment in ARMSS and POAMN. Barbara and I have found a wonderful shared ministry through the Florida Storytellers and love to share our stories. I have learned through reading, sharing, and praying that ministry, in retirement, can and should be just as exciting and vital as those first quaking moments when the “Call” first summoned me to serve in full time ministry. I am recycling but also learning more vital ways to share the Word. I love my full time “part time” ministry!

Find ARMSS online at:
www.armss.org

CONTRIBUTIONS

We are grateful for the extra contributions which we have received in support of ARMSS.

It is your gifts that supports our broad ministry.

The following persons contributed in support of ARMSS since publishing the last newsletter:

David Aaronson	Gordon & Marilyn Foster	Lewis & Kathy Lancaster	Warren & Jean Rutledge
Jack & Susan Angerman	Maryalice Frahm	Ann Lodge	Richard & Joann Schechter
Donald Barnes	Kathleen Fulton	Robert Lucas	Teresa Schofield
Joseph & Elizabeth Barr	Fred Graham	Dorothy Malcolm	Albert Simmons
Jack & Ruth Barrell	Alice Green	John Manos	Stanton Sizemore
Gouedy Baxter	Barbara Hamilton	Lois McCredie	Ken & Betty Smith
Gayle Beanland	Jean Hamlin	Larry & Shirley McCulloch	Howard & Margaret Smith
Philip Bliss	Robert & Joann Hanson	Bruce McQueen	Charles & Susan Stanford
James Bonnell	George & Joanne Hardy	Elizabeth Miller	Norman Stanton
Peggy Bright	Jean Henderson	Lorna Jean Miller	Allan Swan
John Brothers	Mae Hicks	Helen Murphy	Vernon & Margaret Towne
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George & Louise Fischer	Claude Klaver	Nathaniel Rue	Philip & Maryalice Zebley
Michael & Lynn Fonfara	Ira Kugler		
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THANK YOU!

For your generous assistance.

NOTE: If we have failed to recognize you as a contributor for this quarter, please contact Ginny Nyhuis at: gnyhuis@frontier.com or: 615-426-1545.

Your support is vital to our program. Please **mark your check ARMSS** and send contributions to:

James Huffaker, Treasurer
2613 Pine Manor Lane
Albany, GA 31707

ARMSS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND PLEDGE FORM

Use this form to pay your membership fess for 2011, and to make extra contributions to the work of ARMSS. Your contributions are greatly appreciated and can be given for continuing the general mission of ARMSS, or can be designated to go to the Cuba Library Project or the John Rhea fund. Interest from the John Rhea fund is used annually to award scholarships for attendance to the ARMSS Convention.

Dues of \$20 per person (\$40 per couple) are for the 2011 calendar year \$ _____

Pledge for continuing the mission of ARMSS (Tax Deductible) \$ _____

Current Mission Project: Cuba Library (Tax Deductible) \$ _____

John Rhea Fund (Tax Deductible) \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

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Please Print when completing the following information:

Name of Minister

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Phone numbers (home, work, cell)

E-mail address

Presbytery where you hold membership

Presbytery where you currently reside

Synod where you hold membership

Synod where you currently reside

College / Seminary that you attended / graduated from

Please make checks payable to ARMSS and mail to:

James Huffaker, Treasurer
2613 Pine Manor Lane
Albany, GA 31707

ARMSS LEADERSHIP

Some readers have asked who works so hard to move this dynamic organization forward. Here are the persons serving on the Executive Committee who keep ARMSS active and growing.

President: Rev. Bill Gannaway (wgannaway@cox.net)

Vice-President: Rev. Richard Huggins (rlhuggins21@msn.com)

Secretary: Rev. Dick Neelly (suedickneelly@charter.net)

Treasurer: Rev. James Huffaker (j_huffaker@mindspring.com)

Strategic Planning Committee Chair: Rev. Betty Raitt (ejrait@aol.com)

Finance Committee Chair: Rev. Dennis Haines (djhaines41@att.net)

Convention Committee Chair: Rev. Ellen Davis (edavis11@neb.rr.com)

Governing Body Network Chair: Rev. Kenneth Smith (kwsmith7@juno.com)

Nominating Committee Chair: Rev. Jack Banton (eljac1958@verizon.net)

Staff Support: Ginny Nyhuis (gnyhuis@frontier.com)

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