



Elders' Institute NEWSLETTER

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Marilyn Repchuck elder extraordinaire

Marilyn Repchuck is no stranger to many ruling elders in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. In 2009, when Hamilton hosted the 135th General Assembly, Marilyn was convener of the local arrangements committee. This year, attendees at Pre-Assembly Workshops (PAW) 2011 in London learned that Marilyn has served as a ruling elder since 1978. In 2012, she will be one of the workshop leaders for the Elders' Institute's Pre-Assembly Workshops (PAW) 2012.

Sean Fleming, clerk of session at MacNab Street Presbyterian Church stated, "Marilyn was often called to fill in Sunday mornings in our pulpit due to our challenging, lengthy vacancies or (at the last minute) to drive the mini-van bus to collect those



who would otherwise be unable to attend the service. Marilyn always answers the 'call' whenever asked."

Kevin Russell, deputy clerk at MacNab, has known Marilyn for nearly 30 years. He has seen her in action as church treasurer, ruling elder, clerk of session, representative elder, member of the Assembly Council, moderator of the Presbytery of Hamilton (1996–1997) and most recently moderator of the Synod of Southwestern Ontario (2010–2011). Kevin remarked, "Marilyn has filled all those roles in an effective and exemplary fashion. She has set a [continued on page 3]



Marilyn was recognized by Moderator of the 130th General Assembly, the Rev. Dr. Rick Fee, for her term as Convener of the Maclean Estate Committee/Board for Crieff Hills Community.

Pilgrimage 2012



Exploring the Reformed Heritage
France, Switzerland, Scotland
July 6–22, 2012

Enrich your ministry in the leadership of the church and God's mission in our world.

Pilgrimage leaders are Gerald Hobbs, Lynne McNaughton and Roberta Clare, specialists in church history and music, Christian spirituality and religious education.

Register now by contacting Linda Lee Henrickson at pilgrimage@telus.net or 604-538-6635. Limited bursaries are available for eligible ruling elders thanks to the Ewart Foundation. For bursary information, contact the Elders' Institute.

Presbyterian Lingo Answers

For those of you who had “some fun with words” in the spring newsletter, here are the answers:

BOUNDS The limit of a presbytery’s or synod’s authority.

ERECTION The building of a new church.

FRIVOLOUS The appeal is lacking any substance that would enable a higher court to review the matter.

BARRIER ACT The process through which the church considers the possibility of a change in legislation.

CONTUMACIOUS Being obstinate or showing contempt toward an order or action of a court.

COVENANT MEMBER A baptized child who has not yet taken a profession of faith but who may celebrate the sacrament of communion.

SEDERUNT A reference to the official meeting of the court.

OVERSIGHT The responsibility a presbytery has to churches.

EXTRACT It’s not vanilla, not the whole minute, just an important part of information for someone who asks.

ADHERENT Someone attached to a congregation but who is not a professing member.

ADMONITION A form of censure, usually done in private, that entreats an individual or court to cease from a particularly insidious or divisive behaviour.

TRANSLATION The process of moving a minister from one congregation to another.

IN CAMERA It’s not a secret or private presbytery or synod meeting but one dealing with very sensitive matters.

JUDICIAL PROCESS A process through which corrections to an individual’s behaviour or court irregularities or errors may be corrected.

HOMOLOGATE She’s already done it, and we wanted her to do it, so let’s give her our approval.

VEXATIOUS A complaint or appeal lacking sufficient grounds and deemed annoying.



Pre-Assembly Workshops (PAW) 2012



Basics for a changing world

Join with other elders and lay leaders of The Presbyterian Church in Canada for a day of learning with experienced facilitators.

St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church
Scarborough, Ontario
Saturday, June 2, 2012

Highlights:

- Opening worship led by *Duncan Cameron*
- Lunchtime talk by *Charles Fensham*:
Christian Spirituality for an Emerging Church
- Closing worship led by Hilarter musicians

Workshops Options

- > **The Missional Church: Ministry “Outside the Box”**
Keith Boyer
- > **Presbyterian Today**
John Congram
- > **Worship: Welcoming, Worthy and Wise**
Christine O’Reilly
- > **Faith Basics: I Believe; We Believe**
Stephen Farris
- > **Called to Serve**
Marilyn Repchuck

For detailed descriptions of workshops and leaders, registration and payment, visit our website: www.eldersinstitute.ca. Phone toll-free: 1-866-794-8888 to receive a brochure & registration form.

The Missional Church

“Missional church” is a catch-all phrase for trendy movements in church growth and evangelism. The term is fluid and hard to define. This tool clarifies the vision and goals of the missional church.

Missional is an approach to ministry that offers a particular vision of how we understand the purpose and mission of the church. This vision demands a significant shift from an attractional model of church (“If you build it, they will come.” – Kevin Costner’s character in *Field of Dreams*) to an incarnational model (God is present in the world outside the walls of the church.) Rowan Williams, archbishop of Canterbury states, “It is not the church of God that has a mission. It’s the God of mission that has a church.”

In missional churches, everyone participates in identifying and participating in the mission as a call from God. This mission creates the unique call and identity of the entire congregation.

What is God doing in our communities, neighbourhoods, schools, workplaces, recreational places, etc.? What does God want to do in our world? The answers to these questions define the focus and purpose for all church worship, programs and activities. In the missional church, we no longer deliver God into a culture or present God in worship as culturally neutral; rather, we address how God is already at work in the lives of the people with whom we engage every day.

Teaching and ruling elders are missiologists and engage in mission at every level of church work. Their primary responsibility is to empower and train God’s people to discern God’s presence and engage in meaningful conversations about God and the Scriptures in the lives of all God’s people in the communities in which they live and work. They can do this through worship, leadership training programs, spiritual discernment and renewal events for all members of the church community. Check out Elders’ Institute website for training opportunities (workshops and online courses) and more tools.

For more information on the missional church, see <http://www.friendofmissional.org/> and YouTube “missional church – simple.mpg”. ■

standard of performance in each that is hard to match. I know because it has been my honour and challenge to follow her in several of those congregational roles.”

Marilyn admits that being clerk has been her biggest challenge as a ruling elder. She equips herself for this with prayer, which she finds to be very powerful. She encourages elders to practice their spirituality—not just worship, also Bible study. She also stresses the importance of developing an attitude that focuses on what the Lord wants, not just what the church needs, asking, “What is the church called to be and do in these days?”

Kevin stated, “Anything Marilyn undertakes is done cheerfully, with compassion and commitment. Perhaps the best example in all her service is her work as “hospital visitor” for MacNab. Despite spending her work life in a hospital [as a health records technician at St. Joseph’s Hospital in Hamilton], she finds time to visit and minister to our members in hospital and nursing homes. Any of those she has visited remember her many kindnesses with affectionate and appreciative regard.”

Marilyn said, “Volunteering is my life; life would be very dull if I didn’t volunteer.”

Thomas Kay, minister at MacNab commented, “Both Marilyn and her twin Marguerite have incredible gifts of organization and mobilizing people to get things done. I have often joked that if we could clone the Repchucks, we could make a fortune selling them to other churches! One of Marilyn’s greatest gifts is her enthusiasm, and her willingness to take on challenges. What she promises, she does. What she does, she does well.”

Kevin added, “Marilyn may well be the role model for the term ‘multi-tasking.’ We all wonder where she finds the time, let alone the energy, for everything she is doing.... And she still works full time plus lovingly maintains her family responsibilities and takes courses from both The Elders Institute and Knox College. I have long wondered if she actually has the time to sleep at all!

“The Spirit burns brightly in Marilyn! Christian service is the cornerstone of her being!”

To read Marilyn’s full profile, visit the “Special Projects” section of the Elders’ Institute website, “Honouring Ruling Elders for Long-Term Service”: http://eldersinstitute.ca/www/ei_special_projects_profile.asp ■

Question for a Clerk

When the Elders' Institute staff met with the clerks of presbytery, the clerks shared questions from their ruling elders. Here's one of them:

Q: What if the clerk isn't a member of the court?

Ted Siverns, instructor for the upcoming Elders' Institute online course "Serving as a Clerk of Session: Boning up on the Basics," provided the following answer:

Short Answer

If the court is General Assembly, synod or presbytery there is no problem; if session, there could be a problem.

Long Answer


General Assembly clerks are not members of the court unless they are ordained and have been elected as commissioners from their respective presbyteries. If they are present as both clerk of the Assembly and as commissioner, then the wearing of two hats, or at least two different name tags, is called for. If they are not commissioners, their presence is necessary as they provide support for the Assembly but they do not vote.

Synod and presbytery clerks need not be members of those courts. If they are members, they can vote; if they are not members, the privilege and responsibility of voting is denied them. We have a long history of gifted people who are not members of presbytery who have served well as clerks for that court.

Clerks of session (unlike the three other courts) are required to be members of the session. While other courts have an open door policy, the session is the

Elders' Corner

The Elders' Corner is a regular feature of our newsletter that gives you, the ruling elders across Canada, an opportunity to field questions you've come across as an elder. Mail your questions or answers to the Elders' Institute, St. Andrew's Hall, 6040 Iona Drive, Vancouver, BC V6T 2E8, email them to elders@standrews.edu or post them on the Elders' Institute Facebook discussion board marked "Elders' Corner."



**SERVING AS A CLERK
OF SESSION:
BONING UP ON THE BASICS**

eldersinstitute

Online Course

This online course is designed for clerks of session and those discerning a call to become a clerk. Topics include ordination for life and term service, how to organize a session meeting, responsible record keeping and achieving a work-play balance.

**Join other ruling elders online
JAN. 16 - FEB. 24, 2012.**

Instructor: Rev. Dr. L. E. (Ted) Siverns
Registration Fee: \$100

www.eldersinstitute.ca
Toll-Free: 1-866-794-8888



one court that is normally closed (but has the right to include others if it so desires). Some sessions have opened their doors to include a minute taker, often a church secretary appointed as an assistant to the clerk.

Qualifying Statement

Although General Assembly, synod and presbytery normally have an open door policy, there may be times when these courts are dealing with sensitive issues that should not be made public. At such times, there could be a motion to move in camera (closed doors) restricting discussion and vote to those who are members of that particular court. Even with closed doors, however, the court may decide to include others who can contribute to or are affected by the discussion, usually including the clerk.

Summary

Only session clerks are required to be members of the court. ■

Marilyn Repchuck asks: *Where to begin in developing small groups in my church from scratch? I really need to know about the most useful resources out there, leader orientation and support, how this can be put together by teamwork, and overseeing effective small group studies. The team would probably like to explore types of groups, best practices, and the steps to start a small-groups ministry to fit my congregation of about 300 members.* ■

