

TRAINING TEAM NEWSLETTER FOR SUMMER 2020

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**The Summer of 2020**

"Conversation on Race  
Continued:  
It was good to be with you  
all."

a reflection by  
TE Bonnie J. Gatchell

I recently eavesdropped on a sermon being broadcasted from Transformation Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The pastor made an observation of the Parable of the "Good Samaritan," as found in Luke 10, that illuminated the text anew for me. After listening to his sermon, I returned to text to ponder the following, the parable of the "Good Samaritan," the Samaritan (a marginalized, abused people group) finds a man robbed. The Samaritan was not there when the robbery took place. His parents and grandparents did not participate in the robbery. And, yet, the Samaritan did not use this as an excuse. Instead of hiding behind the defense and self-protective



**An Invitation to Rest**  
**Friday, July 31 – 8:30 – 12**  
**noon**

(a POTE Training Team event)

Our world is changing by the moment. Many of us are spinning as we try to steady our worlds. Every conversation and interaction seems like it holds more weight than ever before. We calculate our actions, our words, and our responses. We long to be faithful to our call. And we are tired.

Our God who sees invites us to rest. To trust and rest. This invitation is not new, but sometimes it is difficult to accept the invitation. This retreat space is that. An invitation and space for you to retreat, to quiet the noise, and to rest.

How will we do this? A (Digital)  
Silent Retreat

intellect, the Samaritan asked, "How can I help?" And, he listened without defense or pretense. Without hesitation, he took action regardless of his role in the robbery or not.

As Presbyterians, we have a rich history stretching back more than 300 years. Some of our history, theologians, and publications make up a beautiful tapestry reflecting the Gospel. Other parts are dark. Intentionally or complicatedly participating in racial (and gender) discrimination. This past Tuesday, July 2nd, 36 Teaching, and Ruling elders gathered (virtually) to continue the conversation addressing the darker places of our history, the sin of racism. It was a heavy, good, and honest conversation moderated by TE Andrew Smith. TE Marcos Ortega and TE Joe Kim graciously shared their wisdom, hopes, and perspective on this matter. Questions were even left on the table, which is an excellent place to be for such a conversation.

You and others will be guided through a time of silent retreat and sharing as we meet with one another and meet with God.

What this will entail:

- 8:30-9 am Video Call Welcome
- 9:00-10:30 am Guided Silent Retreat on your own (content and spiritual practices for this time will be provided)
- 10:30-11:15 Video Call to Share about your experience and hear from one another, and encourage one another.
- 11:15-noon Video Call Workshop on Rest in the Everyday

Our guide for the day will be the Rev. Laura Murray (<https://laurabmurray.com>). The cost of the retreat is \$25 and it is limited to 8 participants. To register, contact Steve Mclean ([steve10mclean@gmail.com](mailto:steve10mclean@gmail.com))

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The original teller of the parable was Jesus. Jesus was responding to a well-studied man of privilege, an expert in the law. The question before Jesus was, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" The answer, "Love the Lord and love your neighbor as yourself."

We know this conversation is long overdue. We understand that this is a small step to reconciliation, but it is an essential one none-the-less. We plan to continue these conversations and the much-needed work to bring repair where there has been a rupture. To help us navigate this journey, we need to hear from you if you attended this past Tuesday to be on the lookout for a survey. Please prayerfully consider sharing your feedback with us. If you were not able to participate, we hope to see you next time.

For each one of you who attended on July 2nd, we thank you. TE Andrew Smith for moderating, thank you. For TE Marcos Ortega and TE Joe Kim, thank you for being emotionally generous, it was good to be with you all.

Please email me with other ideas and thoughts on racial reconciliation: [bonniegatchell@gmail.com](mailto:bonniegatchell@gmail.com)

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## UPCOMING GATHERINGS...

**This coming October**, the POTE Training Team will be hosting Tom Becker, founder of The Row House, Inc. based in Lancaster City, to speak for our equipitry via Zoom. Tom Becker earned his Master of Divinity from Covenant Theological Seminary,

### **POTE WEDNESDAY MORNING PRAYER**

Every Wednesday a group of pastors and ruling elders from our POTE churches

focusing on Christianity and Contemporary Culture through the Francis A. Schaeffer Institute. In November 2000 he was ordained a Teaching Elder in the Presbyterian Church in America. In 1999, The Becker family studied at L'Abri, a residential study center in Hampshire, England. Tom's life work is The Row House Forum and he believes that nothing is NOT important to God. He has hosted close to 100 events that are always, as he would describe it, hospitable, civil, utterly human, and a fair bit whimsical. Tom and his family live in a row house in Lancaster city, go to church in the city, and do ministry in the city. The title to Tom's upcoming talk with us is "Living Like Locality Matters." He even wrote a book about the real story of the inception of The Row House, its DNA, and what he dreams about for God's kingdom on God's earth: *Good Posture: Engaging Current Culture With Ancient Faith*.

By TE Bill Cliff

gather to pray for our presbytery,  
churches, pastors and one  
another,  
as well as for  
our nation and world.

You are invited to join us every  
Wednesday, 9-9:30 EST  
by Zoom.

If you need the link or have any  
questions contact  
Steve McLean.

[steve10mclean@gmail.com](mailto:steve10mclean@gmail.com)



## ARE YOU A SMALL CHURCH PASTOR LOOKING FOR SUPPORT?

"Some Rambling Thoughts from a Quarantined Small Church Shepherd"  
Glenn C. Marshall

I write this article, wondering how everyone is doing. With the restrictions on our worship services and other ministries, the inability to do hospital visitation and to see people in nursing homes, and even gather in small groups – these have been difficult times for us. And I suspect that matters are going to become more difficult as we all consider what it will mean to open our church buildings up again. In my small church, we have several people who are immune-compromised. And we also have an elderly population. These are the kinds of concerns that need to be taken seriously as we consider re-opening for public worship.

And we all know the various pressures that are on us. If we don't open, we hear the complaint that we don't trust the Lord. But if we do open, we hear that we don't care about our people. And on it goes. May the

Lord grant all of us the wisdom, discernment, patience, and compassion that we need to do what is both good and right for these times!

These kinds of issues are being discussed on Thursday nights in the Small Church Workshop being facilitated by Roy Yanke of PIR Ministries. This has been an encouraging discussion for small church pastors. The first week, Zack Eswine led us to reflect on the wisdom literature of the Old Testament and how it applies to our current pandemic situation. The second week of our workshop focused on the ministry of the Church for these times. We looked at ministry interior and exterior to the Church. Toward the end of the discussion, a question was raised as to whether we are thriving or just surviving. This question introduced a discussion regarding the metrics used to determine how to give an answer to this query.

This question about metrics leads me to ponder: Perhaps this is a time to rethink what we are doing? I say this, especially for those of us whose churches are more program-driven. Maybe this is a time to take a more missional turn. Are our programs accomplishing anything of value for the Kingdom – or are they just keeping us busy – and tired – and frustrated?

Maybe this is the time to contemplate what the real needs of our communities are. Maybe this is the time to put together plans to meet those needs with the Gospel of Jesus. Perhaps the current shutdown has revealed to us that the programs we have been running are really not that necessary. Perhaps the Lord will use this pandemic to help us to retool and re-focus our attention on the need for mercy ministry – in our churches and in our communities.

On another note: We were hoping to have a small church breakfast again in September at our POTE meeting. Due to the concerns about this ongoing pandemic, our small church breakfast is now being

planned for our January meeting. I'm sure more details about this will be forthcoming as plans are made for future POTE meetings. For all of the small church pastors out there, I've got a question: Do you think it might be helpful to put together a network of small church pastors within the Presbytery? This idea has been suggested to me. Maybe we could have our own Zoom meetings for fellowship and to kick some ideas around. Let me know if you think this might be helpful. In the meantime, stay safe everyone. And remember that the Lord Jesus is still the head of his Church. Let us trust him to lead and guide us through these times - for his glory.



**IF you missed it....and more!**  
**by TE Steve Mclean**

**“The Pastor as Human Being: Recovering Our First Love as Pastors”**

If you missed this April 24th Training Team webinar with Zack Eswine, a recording of it is available on the Presbytery website.

**“Ordinary Church” Workshop Recordings**

In May and June, the EPC hosted a series of workshops focused on resourcing small (aka “ordinary”) churches during this COVID-19 crisis. If you missed these workshops, recordings of them are available at

<https://epc.org/smallerchurchnetwork/smallchurchworkshop>

The topics included...

**A Pastoral Approach to Re-connecting**

**The Life of the Church—Inside and Out!**

**Facing the Financial Impact**

**The Tech Challenge—Its Use, Purpose, and Value for the Future**

## PIR Ministry Resources

In January, Roy Yanke and his team from PIR Ministries presented a couple of seminars to the presbytery on caring for Teaching Elders. We had no idea then how important this information would be to us just a few months later when the COVID-19 crisis would hit us. The pressures that Roy talked about in January have only been magnified during this time. If you are looking for resources for thinking through some of the challenges Teaching Elders are facing, check out the podcast, blog and articles on the resource page at [pirministires.org](http://pirministires.org).

Steve McLean



## Questions?

Email us  
at: [steve10mclean@gmail.com](mailto:steve10mclean@gmail.com)