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The VOICE

Fifth Avenue
Presbyterian
Church 

July–August 2011

"Let each of you lead the life...to which God called you."

—1 Corinthians 7:17



Lately, and all on their own, seemingly disparate articles we've prepared for *The VOICE* have wrapped themselves around a theme. A few months ago, it was *Mission*. Last month, *Outreach*. And now: **Call**.

In hindsight, this one should have been obvious.

In June, Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church not only called two associate pastors, but our first resident in ministry (through the Lilly Endowment's Transition-into-Ministry program). This fall, two FAPC members will begin study for the ministry—calls they heard, and answered, here at FAPC. In this issue, we asked these five ministers and ministers-to-be to reflect on their calls (*pages 3-5*).

Suddenly, other features already in the works presented themselves as call stories as well.

What calls new members to this church (*page 2*)? What calls others to return some portion of their blessings to the congregation (*page 7*)? How does answering a call to service in rural Haiti indelibly color one woman's life in Manhattan (*page 6*)?

Ultimately, questions of call come round to us, again and again. *What is God calling me to do? Who is God calling me to be?*

"Our deepest calling," the educator Parker Palmer wrote, "is to grow into our own authentic self-hood, whether or not it conforms to some image of who we ought to be. As we do so, we will not only find the joy that every human being seeks—we will also find our path of authentic service in the world." *

* Parker J. Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation* (2000).



Called to Belong

WHY WE JOINED

Four times a year, associate pastor Randy Weber shepherds individuals who have come to know Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church—some for a short time, others for years—into full membership with the congregation. The VOICE recently asked a handful of our newer members, "What drew you here?" We are grateful to Christelle Niamke—a new member herself (as of last November)—for compiling their stories.

JULIA BISSELL & SEAN O'NEILL



Julia and Sean joined FAPC after visiting several churches over the years. They found the congregation to be immediately—and amazingly—welcoming. They became active members right away. Julia is involved in development and special events, and Sean is a newly elected Elder. Not to be outdone, their daughter Matilda will greet the congregation at her baptism in the Fall.

"When our daughter was born, we felt the same warm reception that we had prior to joining the church, as several people mailed us letters, gifts, and sent e-mails welcoming Matilda to the world. It was very heartwarming."

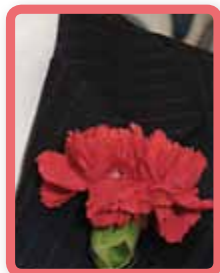
BETH & RAVENEL CURRY

The Currys moved from Summit, NJ, about 10 years ago. Although they had visited many New York City churches, they could not seem to find the perfect one. Then a friend in Atlanta told them, with dismay, that his beloved minister and his family had been called to FAPC. The Currys came to check out Scott Black Johnston.

"As we listened to Scott deliver one of his thoughtful, thought-provoking sermons, and learned about the congregation's various interests and involvement in this community, we knew that we had finally found a church home."



FRED L.



Fred arrived in New York City in 2008 to propel his art and writing career to a higher level. But his first goal was to find a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). It was his 23rd year of sobriety. Friends in San Francisco recommended the "Foglifers and Promises" meetings at FAPC. He eventually joined the church, partly as an expression of gratitude—"a small gesture on my part to ensure the electric bill gets paid for the time I am here."

"I suspect most people who attend FAPC on Sundays are not aware that, on most weekdays, Bonnell Hall, Jones Auditorium and the Kirkland Chapel are filled with people in recovery. It is rare to find an AA meeting in a church that has a working, antique grandfather clock with chimes, and museum-caliber portraiture hanging on the walls."

In accordance with AA policy, we are protecting the anonymity of this member.

MATT & VIKEENA WOLFE

Last year, Matt and Vikeena Wolfe were looking for a church to attend, and a church to get married in. At FAPC, they found both. They became members in March 2010 and were married here the following month. Since then they've been active in Adult Education and NEXT and recently began serving as new member angels.

"We never thought that a big, gorgeous church like this could also be the place that made us feel like family. But the first Sunday we visited FAPC, we were blown away not only by how beautiful the church was, but also by Scott's charge that no one is expected to check 'their minds or their hearts at the door.'"



Called to Ministry

FROM HERE TO SEMINARY



This year the Session voted to recommend Andre Rocha and Ann-Henley Saunders as Inquirers to the Ministry in the Presbyterian Church (USA). In September, the church-mates become classmates, as they begin the Master of Divinity program at Princeton Theological Seminary. Here, the two future ministers tell how FAPC nurtured their call.

By Andre Rocha

FAPC is a learning experience. It is where you pray and learn how to pray. It is where you sing and learn how to sing. It is where corporate worship takes place. Here you will find a congregation that believes in a story about freedom and wisdom written many centuries ago. The story has many different values, and is about a family faithful to the Word of God found in Jesus Christ our Savior.

FAPC is a challenging place. It is where you learn how to read the scriptures and interpret them. It is also where you may renew your soul by asking fresh questions about the one above, who has many faces and only one name. The Holy Spirit is here, working in amazing ways to answer those questions.

As a Presbyterian Church (USA), this church is intrinsically driven by the sovereignty of God, the ministry of the laity and God alone as Lord of the conscious. These concepts have helped Presbyterians for long years, and they are part of the Reformed church.

FAPC is a global shelter. It is inspiring to witness a place where homeless people from the city can find rest. A place of rehabilitation is always welcomed in a fast-paced city.

FAPC is the context in which I have built my faith, the type of faith found in the epistle to the Hebrews: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report." (*Hebrews 11:1-2*)

Born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, I came to America when I was 17 years old. I arrived in Texas at that time to learn English, and I found a similar Christian experience there, too. Today I am 35, and ready to go back to school for a purpose—to study the will of God with all my energy and compassion. My last occupation before coming up with this plan was a consultant position in a high-tech firm based in Montreal, Canada. I started working for this company a few years after my graduation from the University of Maryland at Baltimore County.

My personal background and my attendance at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church since 2002 have provided me with the foundation necessary to start my ministry preparation at Princeton Theological Seminary this fall. These facts have shaped my calling this way, continuously.



By Ann-Henley Saunders

Ever since I can remember, I had a plan. And so did someone else.

Nearly six years ago, I moved to New York to be an actress. I pursued my passion from off-off Broadway to film festivals to TV sets. I spent my days working on Broadway, on Wall Street, even for a famous director and an NFL owner. I had it all. Or so I thought.

"You know what I think?" asked George, my pastor since I was 14. "You need to visit Fifth Avenue Presbyterian."

The moment I stepped into this church, I was home. From planning annual retreats to organizing social activities for the 20- and 30-something crowd, from teaching fifth-graders to learning from three-year-olds, from founding a performing artists' Bible study to being ordained as an Elder, God's presence was becoming harder and harder to ignore. Or contain.

And so it was on May 8, 2010, during NEXT's spring retreat, I heard a voice so loud I thought others could hear: "You're supposed to be a pastor."

"I know," I responded.

During the months that followed, it all came to light: my entire life was in preparation for this moment. Through heartbreak, failure, joys and triumphs, God has been leading me here. Now I am headed to Princeton Theological Seminary in September, and I couldn't be more thrilled to see where God leads me next.

Nearly six years ago, I moved to New York to be an actress. I arrived without a job or even a mattress, but I came armed with hope. I came in search of something. Now I can say with 100% certainty that that something I was searching for was you, Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church.

You healed my broken heart; you encouraged me in doubt as much as faith; you made me feel simultaneously special and not-all-that-unique. You gave me a purpose; you gave me hope. You embraced my strengths, and you forgave my weaknesses. You broadened my definition of family. You expanded my spiritual vocabulary. You let me be me, and you led me home. You gave me wings to fly.

You changed my life, and I love you for it.

Called to Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING AHEAD



On June 12, the congregation unanimously voted to call Kate Dunn and Charlene Han Powell as associate pastors. Here, our new associates reflect on their call.



By Kate Dunn

Seven years ago this spring I joined FAPC's staff as part-time Parish Associate. I loved working for a congregation that valued pastoral care so much, ensuring that homebound, ailing and dying members received regular visits, letters and flowers from clergy, Deacons and laity.

Two years later, when Jan Ammon was leaving, she suggested I apply for her job. I said, "No, thanks." With young children at home, I couldn't imagine it; part-time was fine. Then Randy Weber asked me to apply. "No, thanks," I said. "Well, think about it," he said. The next week he said, "Have you thought about it?" For the first time I wondered, "Oh, dear God. Is this a call? Am I actually supposed to say yes?"

That September I joined the staff as Temporary Supply Pastor. It was a tumultuous time. I soon began to oversee outreach in addition to pastoral care, as the staff grew smaller and everyone's jobs expanded. And yet, throughout that interim period, a committed core of lay leaders undergirded the

staff: Elders and Trustees continued guiding; Deacons ran service drives and visited the homebound; volunteers hosted the shelter; the Women's Association held Tuesday lunches; worship, baptisms, weddings, funerals happened.

The church kept being the church. And each day I looked forward to going to work, and found meaning and challenge in my ministry.

At my first officers' retreat, Roland Perdue gave me communion, saying, "You have all the gifts you need for ministry." I needed to hear that. I suspect I am one of many ministers who feel deeply blessed to have been mentored by Roland—and Jan.

Under Scott's leadership we've moved from crisis management to more intentional ministry, seeking to discern how we can participate in God's vision and hope for the world. I knew God had called me to serve at FAPC during the interim period. I believed God was calling me to stay. I am so grateful that the church affirmed my sense of call.

Looking forward, I hope to continue guiding this compassionate congregation to serve God by being faithful neighbors to those in need, through pastoral care and outreach ministries in our neighborhood, city, nation and world.

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The Rev. Kate Dunn will be installed as Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care and Outreach on Sunday, Oct. 30, at 3 pm in the Sanctuary.

'A Turn in a New Direction'

Q&A with Linda Jiménez

In June, Linda Jiménez—a newly minted graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary—got the call to become the first Lilly Resident in Ministry at FAPC. On July 10, Linda begins a two-year rotation through the ministries and programs of the church. Following is a brief introduction to this newest member of the FAPC clergy.

Tell us about your upbringing.

I was born and raised in Vineland, New Jersey, the birthplace of Welch's Grape Juice. I come from a line of talented musicians, so family time looked more like jam sessions. We'd fill the living room with the sounds of the saxophone, guitar, trumpets, drums, tambourine, congas and four-part harmonies. Because of my family's deep commitment to the body of Christ, I grew up in church choirs, elder board meetings, visitations to congregants' homes, and arts and crafts hour with the church mothers on Tuesday afternoons.

When you went to college, your first choice was music, not church.

Right. In 2001, I began the music education program at Montclair State University, with a vocal concentration. During my first year, I was introduced to the wonderful ministry of Interservice Christian Fellowship. Interservice sparked a new spiritual journey for me. I served on the worship team, in small groups, the executive board and a short-term missions project to the Dominican Republic. I stumbled upon new passions and changed my major to Religious Studies.

When did you hear your call to ministry?

After graduation, I served on staff with Interservice Christian Fellowship. Near the end of my first year, I began to sense that my life was taking a turn in a new direction. After many conversations with supervisors, mentors and close friends, this feeling was confirmed. What I didn't anticipate was the consistency in



their suggestions, as I repeatedly heard, "Linda, have you ever considered seminary?" Each time I heard *the question*, I faithfully replied with a shaky and hesitant "yes."

What was the best part of seminary for you?

Serving as a chapel assistant. It was in chapel that I got to know all of the wonderful faces of my community as I passed the peace of Christ at the end of each service, grew in my musical gifts, ministered to our community through the power of prayer, and learned what it means to serve when no one is watching. Chapel was also the place where I grew to know and love my mentor, the Rev. Janice Smith Ammon, who I know is also a beloved member of the FAPC *familia*.

Name one more thing you would like the people of FAPC to know about you.

I have to name two, because I love both of these too much. The first is salsa dancing. I started taking lessons in undergrad and had the opportunity to dance with the Latin@ dance team on campus. I've even helped to teach salsa lessons at Princeton Theological Seminary. My second fun fact is that I love fashion. I was a late bloomer in this arena, but now I love it.

By Charlene Han Powell

I have had a lot of first jobs. My first job in high school was working the register at The Gap. My first job in college was as a dance teacher. My first job in New York City was waitressing in Rockefeller Plaza. And now, my first job as an ordained minister of the Word and Sacrament will be at a church that I love deeply and believe in fully.

It's funny, because most people's first jobs end up being horrible experiences. I have never had one of those, and I definitely don't plan on starting now.

For the past year, I have learned a lifetime of lessons and skills under the wise guidance of the staff and congregation here at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church. To be given the opportunity to stay and continue this process of growing is a privilege and honor that both humbles and excites me.

As I continue to work with NEXT Ministries, my hope is to offer more and more young adults in this city a community where they will not only feel challenged to grow, but also feel safe to discuss hard questions with friends they trust.

With the growing number of families at FAPC, my goal with Family Ministries is to equip parents with the tools they need to bring up their children in faith, while also nurturing creativity and openness to the unique demands that arise in this diverse city. And most importantly, I want to instill in the children and youth a firm understanding of God's love for them that will carry them through their younger years and beyond.

Finally, my greatest desire is that Adult Education further becomes a ministry where the church can learn and grow, all the while coming closer together as a community that is united by a shared desire to be responsible Christians.

All of these things I know can only be done by the grace of God and with the gifts and talents of our great church family.

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Charlene Han Powell will be ordained as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and installed as Associate Pastor for Christian Education on Sunday, Oct. 2, at 3 pm in the Sanctuary.

Called to Rebuild

MEMORIES OF MISSION



Haiti Mission Trip

For a week in May, FAPC members Sally Harwood and Melanie Musgrove assisted in a rebuilding project in Haiti sponsored by the Building Goodness Foundation and the Haiti Fund, Inc. They were part of a team that helped construct a replacement house for a family that lost its home in last year's earthquake. Harwood, a member of the Haiti Fund board, hopes to organize another mission trip to the country in 2012. In this brief essay, Musgrove shares her memories of her first encounter with Haiti and its people.



Construction of a replacement house for a Haitian family.

By Melanie Musgrove

What is it that I missed most this morning as I awoke stateside? Surprisingly it was the frogs. And the other morning sounds of Haiti that woke us with the sun around 4:30 am—the birds, the roosters and the occasional loud moo from a cow that had wandered under our bedroom window during the night.

Yes, I also miss the sights, the sounds, the feelings...

The sights were breathtaking. Hibiscus and bougainvillea and green after green of trees doing their best to completely refill every inch of the mountainsides. Multitudes of blue tent covers representing temporary housing throughout Port-au-Prince and in nearby villages. Terraced fields that the Haiti Fund is helping to build to withstand the next hurricane. provide valuable crops and support reforestation. The smiles of the crew as we join them at the worksite—Rene, Guito, Maradonna, Joubert, Jimmy and Walton. The beautifully pressed and brightly colored school uniforms of the children we pass as we wind our way up the mountain.

The sounds were mesmerizing. The kids at the building sites reciting their English alphabet to us with a Creole/French lilt to their voices. The "Bonjou" and "Bonswa" in greeting everywhere. The hammering and power tools ringing in our ears long after we left the building sites behind.

The feelings were overpowering. My growing appreciation as I learn and experience more about this valuable program of development through incentive, a program of reforestation that has driven coverage of approximately 46 square miles or 30,000 acres (12,000 hectares) in a patchwork quilt of reclaimed land, through a partnership with local teams. The pride and joy of a wife and mother as she brings out a huge pot of white rice and another pot of black beans, to serve a noon meal to the dozen of us rebuilding her house. The feelings of acceptance as Sally and I express our humility to the talented and experienced crew, pointing to ourselves and saying "fou blanc" ("crazy white person"), a phrase of universal value, regardless of what continent I'm on.

Those memories I'll try my best to hold onto as I resume my morning walks through Central Park on my way to midtown.



Above: Melanie Musgrove with three new Haitian friends. Below: Sally Harwood (foreground, center) with fellow volunteers.



Called to Give Back

A GIFT TO FUTURE GENERATIONS



Donald and Jeanne Pape became members of the Legacy Association when they remembered Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in their wills.

By John Crane

Jeanne Pape's earliest memory of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church is riding the elevators to visit her mother, Grace Schneider, who worked on the sixth floor of the church house. Her mother spent almost 30 years helping research the sermons for both the Rev. Dr. John Sutherland Bonnell and the Rev. Dr. Bryant Kirkland, FAPC's senior pastors from 1935 to 1987.

Jeanne joined FAPC in 1979 and was delighted when her future husband, Donald, decided to join and become active in the church. Their list of activities over the years is impressive. Both have served extensively as officers. They were the first coordinators of the homeless shelter. They have been active in outreach, clubs, social events, stewardship drives and nominating committees.

Now they have reached another milestone on their journey of faith. They are members of the Legacy Association, having named Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church as a beneficiary in their wills. "It was our chance to tithe in thanksgiving for all we have been given," Jeanne says. "It was probably the easiest part of the will-making process."

FAPC established the Legacy Association to recognize and thank members and friends who have remembered the church through "planned giving." More than 130 individuals have made such a commitment, a gift to future generations.

A will is just one of several ways to become a member of the Legacy Association. FAPC may also be named as a beneficiary of bank and retirement accounts, life insurance policies, annuities and trusts. These opportunities may particularly appeal to younger adults, who might still be contemplating their wills and estate planning.

Early in her career, Susan Callahan, FAPC's assistant clerk of Session, didn't think about the church when she was asked to name a beneficiary for her life insurance at a new job. But she has remembered FAPC several times since.

"It was such an obvious thing that I can't believe I overlooked it for years," she says. "I could have started right out of college, but I didn't realize it at the time. There are so many opportunities for remembering the church as a beneficiary—any time you open a bank account, a CD or an annuity."

Andy Craven and Lori Lauman decided to include FAPC in their will because the church has played such an important role in their spiritual journey. The couple met at the church, after being encouraged by relatives to attend. They were married here in 2003. Andy has served as a Deacon and Elder and been involved with the shelter and Adult Education. Lori has been deeply engaged with the Stephen ministry and small-group worship.

"Lori and I have grown together and evolved with the church," Andy says. "When we were going through the thought process of our first joint will, it seemed like such a natural thing to include FAPC. We were happy to be in the position to give something back to FAPC, as it has provided so much to us."

John Crane is a member of the Board of Trustees and a frequent contributor to The VOICE.

DETAILS

If you are considering making a planned gift to Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, or would like more information, please contact the Rev. Randy Weber (rweber@fapc.org). If you have already remembered FAPC in your planned giving but have not notified the church, please let Rev. Weber know.

Upcoming Events

JUL-AUG

JULY

- 10 **Worship.** Charlene Han Powell, M.Div., preaching. 10 am, Sanctuary.
- 17 **Worship.** The Rev. Kate Dunn, preaching. 10 am, Sanctuary.
- 23 **NEXT Ministries' Mission Trip to Guatemala.** Through July 31.
- 24 **Worship.** The Rev. Randy Weber, preaching. 10 am, Sanctuary.
- 31 **Worship.** The Rev. Kate Dunn, preaching. 10 am, Sanctuary.

AUGUST

- 1 **Women's Association Crafts Group.** The Crafts Group, on hiatus throughout July, resumes its regular weekly gatherings. 10:30 am, Boardroom.
- 7 **Worship.** The Rev. Janice Smith Ammon, Bryant M. Kirkland Minister of the Chapel, Princeton Theological Seminary, is our guest preacher. 10 am, Sanctuary.
- 14 **Worship.** The Rev. Kate Dunn, preaching. 10 am, Sanctuary.

- 15-19 **Vacation Bible School.** Vacation Bible School is just around the corner. So get out your beach bag and towels and get ready for SonSurf Beach Bash. Registration and information can be found on fapc.org and at the 55th Street entrance. 9:30 am – 12 noon, Christian Education Center.
- 21 **Worship.** The Rev. Randy Weber, preaching. 10 am, Sanctuary.
- 28 **Worship.** Charlene Han Powell, M.Div., preaching. 10 am, Sanctuary.

COMING IN SEPTEMBER

- 5 **Labor Day holiday.** Building closed.
- 11 **9/11 Observance.** Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church will host an interfaith service commemorating the 10th anniversary of 9/11. Details will be announced later this summer.

The American Jenny Lind

Halley Gilbert, an accomplished soloist and soprano section leader with the FAPC choir, has added an eye-catching line to her resume—she is the 63rd American Jenny Lind. This spring Gilbert was named the U.S. winner of the annual "American and Swedish Jenny Lind Competition," created in 1949 as a tribute to the singer known as the "Swedish Nightingale." In the late 19th century, P.T. Barnum introduced Lind to American audiences in sold-out concerts throughout the country. Gilbert and her Swedish counterpart, Rebecca Rasmussen, performed in the Barnum Festival and other special events in Connecticut earlier this summer. She was also featured on WQXR Radio's Young Artists Showcase, a performance available online at wqxr.org/people/halley-gilbert. You can also hear Halley right here at FAPC when she performs a featured solo in Handel's *Holy Art Thou* on July 24.



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