



Refugee Family Update

The Syrian family being supported by OPMH and its partner churches is continuing to settle into their new home in Falls Church. The five children are all in school, and the father is pursuing potential job opportunities. Anyone who knows of potential employment opportunities should contact Alan Matney (alanmatney@hotmail.com) or Rich Rawson (rawson113va@gmail.com).

People can help with donations designated for the refugee ministry, which will be used to purchase gift cards, or to address specific family needs. Checks may be written to OPMH with “refugee donation” in the memo line. Our teams continue to provide transportation, meals, fellowship, and guidance as the family adjusts to life in America — a big thank you to everyone who has been involved!

In this Issue

November Adult Education	page 2
Meeting House Outdoors	page 3
Stockings for Soldiers	page 4
AG Market	page 6
Senior Side Bar	page 7

Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve Worship Schedules

If you’ve looked ahead on the calendar, you may have noticed that Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve are on Sundays this year. This has prompted us to schedule one worship service at 11 a.m. with no classes on Sunday, December 24.



The Christmas Eve Family Service and Pageant will be at 4:30 p.m. and the Colonial-Inspired Candlelight Worship Service will be at 8 p.m. On Sunday, December 31, we will have one worship service at 11:00 a.m. with no classes.

Old Presbyterian Meeting House

323 South Fairfax Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-3716
703-549-6670 - phone
www.opmh.org

Office Hours:
8:30 am – 4:30 pm, Monday – Friday

The Old Presbyterian Meeting House is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the National Capital Presbytery, and a Covenant Network congregation.

Advent 2017 at a glance

December 1

Taizé Service

December 2

Scottish Walk

Cookie Walk

Youth Lock-In

December 3

First Sunday of Advent

with Communion

Alternative Giving Market

December 6, 13, and 20

Noonday Noëls

December 10

Second Sunday of Advent

Alternative Giving Market

Dinner with Christmas Fun

Christmas Readings

December 17

Third Sunday of Advent

December 24

Fourth Sunday of Advent

One worship service at 11 a.m.

Christmas Joy Offering

Christmas Pageant at 4:30 p.m.

Candlelight Service at 8 p.m.

Meeting House Staff

The Rev. Dr. Robert R. Laha, Jr.
Senior Pastor
rlaha@opmh.org

The Rev. Katherine A. Stanford
Associate Pastor
kstanford@opmh.org

The Rev. Ann E. Herlin
Associate Pastor
aherlin@opmh.org

The Rev. Dr. Jon Smoot
Parish Associate

Mr. Samuel Baker
Director of Music/Organist
sbaker@opmh.org

Mrs. Noelle Castin
Director of Christian Education
ncastin@opmh.org

Mrs. Mary Pratt Perry
Youth Director
mpratt@opmh.org

Mrs. Heather Starek
Communications Manager
hstarek@opmh.org

Mrs. Ellen Haas
Computer Specialist
ehaas@opmh.org

Mrs. Leslie Mounts
Administrative Coordinator
lmounts@opmh.org

Mrs. Tania Ryan
MHCP Director
taniaryan@aol.com

Mr. David Heiby
*Superintendent, Presbyterian
Cemetery & Columbarium*
dheiby@cox.net

Please submit materials for the newsletter through your ministry leadership by the second Tuesday of the month before the issue date. [The deadline for the December issue is November 17.](#)

November Adult Education

Adult Bible Study: The Davidic Covenant: Why Israel's Kings Matter to the Messiah

Through November 26 – Westminster Hall

The Bible study will focus on those parts of the book of Samuel and Kings that deal with the importance of kingship and the men who were Israel's first monarchs. All of this will help us see why it was important that Jesus be born "of the house and lineage of David."

Will the First Amendment Survive the Information Age?

November 5 – Heritage Hall

On November 5, the first part of the morning's class will focus on going a bit further in exploring the October 29 class and the six questions raised by Anders Gyllenhaal about what the future holds for the First Amendment. The second half of the session will highlight last February's Cuba Trip. A short travelogue about last year's trip will be presented, and learn more about the next trip in March 2018.

Presbyterians Build Churches in Alexandria: 1775 and 1837

November 12, 19, & 26 – Heritage Hall

Members of OPMH love their historic worship space! Join us to find out more about the architectural history, including new discoveries, with a three-week series led by member Baird Smith. OPMH and other local 18th century churches will be presented. Topics include: Settlement Patterns and Early Churches in the Mid-Atlantic (1700-1774), Alexandria Presbyterians Build a Church (1775) and Alexandria Presbyterians Lose and Rebuild Their Church (1837 and Beyond).

Welcome Our New Members

Lauren Boyette
Judy Grey
Jim and Melissa Huggins
Todd and Megan Parker
Chris Wheedleton

Please join us on November 19 at the 11 a.m. service to welcome them to the Meeting House.

Daylight Saving Time Ends November 5



Get Out the Vote (GOTV) for VOICE

VOICE has its own set of issues identified through hundreds of listening sessions this past year. To have the power to get candidates of any party to support these issues, we have to show we can be a grassroots force in elections. VOICE has selected four places to demonstrate we can boost voter turnout among people.



We are recruiting a few volunteers from each VOICE member congregation to act as GOTV canvassers or phone bankers in two Fairfax County (Districts 67 and 86) and two Prince William County precincts (District 2 and District 50) that have had historically low voter turnout. You will commit 2.5 to 3 hours (with training included) to be part of organized efforts on selected dates. Canvassers will go out in pairs to talk directly with voters door-to-door. Canvassers and phone bankers will only encourage registered voters to vote on November 7. VOICE organized a similar effort in Arlington County last year that the Arlington commissioners still cite with respect as evidence of VOICE's commitment to grassroots democracy. Eyes are on Virginia to see if citizens are motivated to use their vote to voice their concerns. Strong voter turnout is crucial to hold public leaders accountable to a broader constituency within their communities. If you can do this on one or more days, please contact Gail Freunsch (gfre5@verizon.net) for the dates, times and other details.

Third Graders Receive their Bibles on November 19

On Sunday, November 19, third graders will receive their Bibles at the 11 a.m. service. If you have a third grader, please email his/her child's complete name to Noelle Castin (ncastin@opmh.org).

Middle and High School Youth Groups Visit Guest House



Middle School Youth at Guest House

During October, our Middle and High School Youth Groups visited Guest House. The groups shared a meal and fellowship with the women living there. The youth were able to hear the women speak about their experiences and how Guest House has helped them during this transition period in their lives.

Please keep those who are attending the All Church retreat in Massanetta this weekend in your thoughts and prayers.



Fall Foray to Huntley Meadows

Meeting House members and friends ages 2 to 92+ are invited to our second outing to enjoy God's creation at Huntley Meadows Park on Sunday, November 12, 2017 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Our own Jen Crawford will offer a nature program about changes of fall at Huntley Meadows. We'll start our discussion at the outdoor classroom to the right of the entrance trail, explore the park and return to the outdoor classroom for a visit with special animal friends from the park, as well as a seasonal snack and a craft for children. The parking lot for the park's visitor's center is located about 5 miles southwest of the church grounds at 3701 Lockheed Boulevard, Alexandria (please use this address for GPS directions), near Route 1. Recommended items to bring with you: water and sunglasses. If you know in advance that you can join us, please email Margaret Rizzi (rizzifamily1@cox.net). You are welcome to decide to come that day or to bring a friend – the more the merrier!



Building the Power in “WE the People:” VOICE State Election Forum, October 15, 2017

On October 15, nearly 1,600 Metro IAF Virginians from 58 VOICE congregations and schools throughout northern Virginia secured commitments from Virginia Gubernatorial Candidates Mr. Ed Gillespie (R) and Lieutenant Governor Ralph Northam (D) to:

- raise Virginia's felony larceny level (currently \$200, tied with NJ for lowest in the country);
- increase support for public schools and the Housing Trust Fund;
- fix Washington's crumbling public transit
- support DREAMers; and
- convene law enforcement and educators to end hate crimes and bullying.

Leaders and clergy from all different faiths and ethnicities packed a Prince William County high school auditorium and reignited the call for “We the People,” a building of the citizen power required to demand action on its statewide Election Agenda, to forge alliances across the political and economic spectrum to move on these issues, and to compromise where necessary to create change.

The forum had a tight agenda, and ground rules for both the candidates and the audience. Dr. Northam and Mr. Gillespie were there to respond to the critical issues VOICE leaders discovered in hundreds of listening sessions throughout Northern Virginia communities. Both candidates had been fully briefed on the questions that would be asked, and the results were generally satisfying: Gubernatorial Candidates Gillespie and Northam committed, if elected, to meet with VOICE at least twice a year, including before the state budget is formulated. Both candidates also pledged to attend listening sessions to hear issues faced by WMATA metro workers, teachers, DREAMers and others in the community. (See their full, written responses at <https://voice-iaf.us4.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8af488d7bc3ca8c286e16b94d&d=c31654ebac&e=d4dd8efc16>).

The success of this event, and the Herculean efforts of many to organize and execute it, reminds us that **VOICE remains committed to the core beliefs that bind us together:**

1. Our faiths demand that we stand together as a people. Republicans, Democrats, Independents, Muslims, immigrants, whites, African Americans, Jews, Christians, Unitarians, working-class, middle-class, the very wealthy and the very poor. We are wiser, smarter, and more powerful when we stand and work together.
2. We will use the power of our organization to put an end to any specific threats, intimidation or attempts to harm immigrants, Muslims, African Americans or any one else. We will call to account any person or group that does so.
3. We know that Virginia and our Country are stronger when more, not fewer, people are engaged in the democratic process. VOICE believes in building relational power: power that is reciprocal that is guided by our religious traditions and power that allows more people to participate in public life.
4. We believe in meeting face to face and developing the public relationships that are the glue of our society. We know this is how meaningful relationships and trust are built. We value seeking solutions through creativity and dynamic friction that work best when we are in relationship with each other and with those from whom we seek change.
5. We must reclaim politics as an honorable pursuit in which people working together have the power to change their communities and their country for the better. We must lead by showing that, if we build trust through relationships that cross the usual lines of division, we will strengthen our region for the challenges ahead.

2017 Mid-Week Connections



This year's Mid-Week Connection series focused on Contemporary Islam and how can foster better relationships with our Muslim brothers and sisters.

Guest listening to our Mid-Week Connection speakers, Seher Siddiquee (far left) and Fatimah Popal.

12th Annual Stockings for Soldiers

The Meeting House youth would like to send some Christmas cheer to military personnel overseas. Simply pick up a stocking and stuff it with goodies for the holiday – don't forget a Christmas card and personal note to let the troops know they are not alone. Children's drawings are a real hit! To participate, pick up a stocking to stuff (or purchase a stocking yourself) from our youth after the worship services on November 5 and 12. Please return stockings to the church before November 28. We are also asking that you donate \$5 for shipping the stocking around the world. (It can be pinned to the stocking, or placed in the marked can.) Thank you for helping send "tidings of



comfort and joy" to homesick soldiers! If you have an address of a friend or a relative serving abroad who would like to receive a stocking, have questions or want to help, please contact Lee and Andy Berner (berner_lee@yahoo.com). **Suggested items:**

“Wicking” socks	sun screen	personal tissue packets
canned fruit (peel off lid)	disposable razors	hard candy
powdered drink mix	disposable cameras	beef jerky, slim jims
mint chewing gum	power bars	dried fruit, nuts
mint Lifesavers or Altoids	foot powder	personal notes
international phone cards	Q-tips	baby/hand wipes or
cookies	toothbrush/toothpaste	hand sanitizer
stamps	AA batteries	magazines
postcards/notecards	little bottles of shampoo	etc.

3rd Annual Empty Bowls Alexandria Fundraiser

Join ALIVE! on Saturday, November 18, 6:00-8:30 p.m., for a supper, raffle, and entertainment to raise awareness for those who are living in poverty and hungry in



Alexandria – 1 in 5 families are struggling to put food on the table in our city. The dinner will be held at the Durant Arts Center on 1605 Cameron Street, Alexandria. Those attending will receive a bowl handmade by local artists. The T.C. Williams High School Jazz Ensemble will provide entertainment.

The cost is \$40/person but larger donations are welcome. You can become a sponsor at \$500. Proceeds will provide food, shelter, emergency help, and education for at-risk Alexandrians.

For more information, contact Joan Moser (Joanmoser1947@gmail.com). To register online, go to alive-inc.org.

Donate Gifts to the Holiday Sharing Box

Each year many of the families eligible to be sponsored through the Holiday Sharing Program are not matched with sponsors because there are not enough people who volunteer to sponsor families. Adults in the remaining families can visit a local recreation center in mid-December and choose toys and other gifts for their children from a big city-wide collection, the Alexandria Toy Drive. Please consider donating new, unwrapped toys, books, sports equipment and other items for kids ages 1-13 to the Alexandria Toy Drive collection box in the church office by Sunday, December 10. If you include your name, we can thank you for your donation. Contact Margaret Rizzi at (rizzifamily1@cox.net) with any questions.



Rise Against Hunger Meal Packing Event on November 19

Come pack 10,000 nutritious meals in less than two hours for Rise Against Hunger (formerly Stop Hunger Now) on Sunday, November 19, at 12:30 p.m. Lunch will be served between the end of the 11 a.m. worship service and the meal-packing event. Rise Against Hunger is an international hunger relief agency that distributes food and other lifesaving aid to children and families in countries all over the world. The meals are distributed through school feeding programs, vocational training centers, child development programs, orphanages, or medical clinics. The meals we packaged last March were shipped to Haiti to be distributed by Salesian Missions.



After All These Years: Roman Catholic and Reformed Perspectives on the Reformations of the 16th Century

November 17-18, National Presbyterian Church

The Reformed Institute is commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformations of the 16th Century in a conference designed to take a fresh look at the events of that era in light of subsequent developments and that reflects the current thinking of both Reformed Protestants and Roman Catholics. The conference is Friday morning, November 17 through Saturday noon, November 18 at National Presbyterian Church in D.C. Dr. Bruce Gordon of Yale and Dr. Brad Gregory of Notre Dame are the featured speakers. Breakout groups, meals and a Friday evening music program (open to the public) are included in the fee. Reduced fee for students and retirees, and a separate fee for Saturday only. Visit reformedinstitute.org for details and to register by November 7.

Alternative Giving Christmas Market 2017 – December 3 and 10



As you start to think about your Christmas shopping, don't forget the Alternative Giving Market in Fellowship Hall on December 3 from noon to 1 p.m. and December 10 from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. You'll be able to get a unique present for Aunt

Martha and Uncle George that is not a boring piece of clothing or a book they don't like! Instead, you can give an adventurous gift like a goat from Haiti to help a family or groceries for a needy Senior. Make plans now to attend the AG Christmas Market! For more information, contact Lois Rawson (lorawson@comcast.net).

Children's Thanksgiving Offering

Your contributions to the Thanksgiving Offering on Sunday, November 19, ensure that families in need will be served throughout the year, from pediatric hospice to temporary and long-term residential care, and from educational programs to family counseling. The Thanksgiving Offering has supported three agencies in the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic for over 50 years: HumanKind (founded as Presbyterian Homes and Family Services), Presbyterian Children's Home of the Highlands, and Edmarc Hospice for Children. Please write "Thanksgiving Offering" on your envelope or on the memo line of your check.

Pardon Our Dust!

Beginning Monday, November 6, you will see some temporary changes behind the bell tower in the churchyard. In preparation for future hot and humid summers, the air-handling unit in the bell tower will be replaced. Because of its location, this is no simple task. Scaffolding will be erected behind the bell tower and one of the windows will be temporarily removed to provide access to the equipment. The project may extend into the month of December. Let us hope that our late warm weather is behind us, but if we have a warm Sunday in November please dress accordingly as air conditioning will not be an option.

This work is being funded from the recently established Maintenance Reserve Fund, which was created out of the *Following the Spirit* campaign. The project is one that has been needed for quite some time due to both the reliability and efficiency of the air conditioning but also for the damage the existing system has caused. The installation of the new equipment will eliminate the condensation that has caused the deterioration of plaster in the nave behind the pulpit. Once the equipment replacement has been completed, we will make plans to repair the plaster.

Calling All Bakers!

We are holding the fourth annual Cookie Walk this year on Saturday, December 2, from noon – 3 p.m. in Heritage Hall. Last year was a great success for us as we raised well over \$1000. Bakers are asked to bake between 3-5 dozen cookies, but any amount is fine. You don't have to bake all of the same kinds of cookies. You can start baking now if you like and freeze them. As with last year, you will be able to drop your cookies off a few days in advance of the event. All proceeds will once again go to the conservation of the burial ground. If you would be willing to bake cookies, please contact Andrea and Tobin Tracey (glenecho08@gmail.com).



Join the Carpenter's Shelter Dinner Team!

On the fourth Sunday of February, April, June, August, October, and December, Meeting House volunteers provide dinner for residents of Carpenter's Shelter, a shelter for men, women and children located at the north end of Old Town. Each Sunday assigned to the Meeting House, two kinds of help are needed:

- Making and Shopping for the Food: A group of 8 to 10 volunteers prepares homemade food or shops for prepared food, and delivers their items to the kitchen at the shelter by 5:15 p.m.
- Preparing Dinner and Serving: Starting at 5:15 p.m., another group of four to five volunteers prepares the kitchen and eating areas for dinner – setting aside servings of each item for residents who have notified the shelter that they are returning late; making the salad, side and desserts into individual portions; and getting iced tea and lemonade ready. When it is time for dinner, residents come up to a counter with an open window between the kitchen and the eating area. Children and their parents eat first, starting around 6:30 p.m., then the other shelter residents are served. Several volunteers put portions of the main dish, side and salad on plates, and the other volunteers help in the kitchen tasks. Once everyone has been served, residents are offered additional servings of the remaining food. A selection of the available desserts is put on the counter so residents can choose the dessert they like best. Once the last of the food is wrapped up, volunteers head home for the night around 7:00 to 7:15 p.m.



Carpenter's Shelter

with residents, and getting to know each other.

Joining the Carpenter's Shelter dinner team is a great way to support an important social service organization in the Alexandria community, to directly help people in need and to make more connections in the Meeting House community. Try volunteering on your own, or with a family member or friend. This week's volunteers included a couple with grandchildren, a parent of teens, and a Mom of a young child. Children and youth are not able to prep and serve, but they can help make food and special treats at home. Interested or have questions? Contact Atilla Kocsis (atilla@digitalphenom.com).

This past week, dinner included large baked pans of spaghetti in red sauce with meatballs and cheese, garlic bread, salad, and assortment of cookies and cupcakes. Shirley, a long-time volunteer, started the dinner prep and helped three new volunteers learn the system. Jen, another volunteer who has helped with dinners for several years, joined in as the mealtime drew near. With many hands, the work in the kitchen went quickly. Over the course of two hours, new and returning Meeting House volunteers enjoyed preparing and serving dinner, talking

Senior Sidebar



Have you ever wanted to know more about your ancestors and to learn how you can discover the exciting history of your family tree? Come join professional genealogist Sharon Hodges in a discussion on ways to explore and create your family history, including an interactive exercise on how to get started! This free event will be held on Wednesday, November 15 at Beatley Central Library, 5005 Duke Street, from 9:30 a.m. to noon. Register by calling Senior Services of Alexandria at 703-836-4414 ext. 110 or at seniorservicesalex.org.

Cuba Trip March 2018

New York Avenue Presbyterian Church is visiting their partner church, First Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Havana, March 19-26, 2018. The cost of the trip is approximately \$1,500. Contact Marilyn Seiber (703-893-1559 or mjs1wan2@gmail.com) to sign up by Sunday, November 19. To learn more about the experience of the seven Meeting House members who went last March, please contact Margo Williams (mjw1021@gmail.com).

Calendars for Prisoners Collection Boxes Now in Narthex and Office

The 2018 calendar collection boxes are in the church office, and narthex during the month of November. Please donate your extra calendars for this part of the OPMH prison ministry. Your contributions will be distributed to Assisting Families of Inmates in Richmond, the Alexandria Sheriff's Office, and Guest House. If you have any questions, please call Gail Freunsch at 703-303-6402. Thanks for your contributions!



Christmas Flowers & Greens Dedications

Please consider honoring or dedicating to the memory of a loved one with a poinsettia or greens dedication. You may take your dedicated poinsettia home following the last service on December 24. The poinsettias and greens will be placed in the sanctuary in December and remain through the season. Place your dedication in the offering plate or take it to the church office. Please make out your check to OPMH and write, "Poinsettia Dedication" on the memo line. **Please fill out the form below and order by November 30.**

I/We would like to dedicate poinsettias

Dedicated to the memory of _____ by _____; or

In honor of _____ by _____

I/We would like to dedicate greens

Dedicated to the memory of _____ by _____; or

In honor of _____ by _____

Enclosed is my/our check for: _____ (\$20 per poinsettia; \$25 per piece of greenery).

Old Presbyterian Meeting House

323 South Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-3716

www.opmh.org

To see a calendar of upcoming events, visit
www.opmh.org and click on "Calendar."