



## The Gift of Presence

A letter from Luta Garbat-Welch, March 2016

Bessia Mboma, my language helper in Malawi, comes to our house three or four times a week to help me practice Chichewa. Some days we sit together and do “look and listen”— a technique to help learn new words. Other days we go on walks around the neighborhood and talk. Walking together in the neighborhood helps me to practice putting new words into sentences, which opens up a whole new world of grammar!



Bessia playing “cooking” with our son

In December Bessia’s grandmother died after a short bout of illness in the hospital. In Malawi when someone dies the community gathers at the home of the bereaved. In the city the men sit outside under the trees and the women gather inside, where the body will be laid for viewing. The women sit together and sing hymns, many from memory, as they wait for the body to arrive. Many women will stay with the family, singing hymns all through the night until the body is taken for burial. The day Bessia’s grandmother died I joined with other women in her community and sat inside the house, singing hymns, sharing words of comfort with the family, and hearing brief snippets about “Granny.” One song Bessia asked us to sing was 12 verses long and not particularly upbeat. About 6 verses in, the singing petered out and the women declared that it was too long and surely no one could sing the whole song. Bessia commented with a chuckle, “Granny used to sing it all the way through.” I found a great peace at being able to be present with Bessia in her grief.

Bessia is studying Education at the African Bible College, which is just a 10-minute walk from our house. She is in the same age range as my two younger sisters and really has become a sister to me. Before we left Malawi I had one last work trip up to Mzuzu in the northern part of Malawi, and I took her and our son with me so Jeremy could focus on packing without a 2-year-old “helping.” Bessia had never been to the northern part of Malawi and it was a joy to watch her face as she saw the incredible beauty of the north. At one point we stopped on the roadside to buy fried cassava and she got back in the car and exclaimed, “It’s like I’m in another country, they don’t speak Chichewa!” (Chitumbuka is the primary language of the north).

During our long car ride Bessia and I were able to share more about our lives together. Bessia and her two younger brothers were orphaned when she was 13. She and her brothers were taken in by various family members, sometimes together, sometimes split up, and not always sure with whom they would be living from year to year. As with all people there were joys and sorrows in this experience.

In reflecting on her story I realized that I often think of orphans as being poorly cared for by their extended family, and that the best they can hope for in life is to survive. But Bessia was well taken care of by her family — her uncle ensured that she finished high school, a powerful testimony in a country where most parents struggle to send all of their children to high school and where girls, especially a niece, would not have been prioritized. And yet, even with the care Bessia received, I heard her say that the loss of her parents never disappears. In hearing Bessia's story I saw even more clearly how deeply she reflects the love of Christ for her family and for those around her, because her own love of Christ is deep and wide. She has been a challenge and an encouragement to my faith.

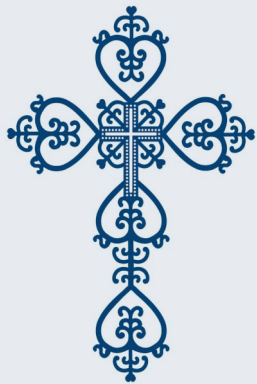
Our relationship with Bessia is not one of 'work,' or 'ministry' — she is not a colleague from one of our church partners, but when we think about our time in Malawi she is always in our minds. The gift of presence is one of the greatest gifts we can give to people, the sharing of ourselves. We learn this through Christ's example. The disciples traveled with Jesus and learned through his teachings, but also through his presence. He set an example through his behavior that showed what mattered: healing the sick, caring for the needy, advocating for and protecting those who were vulnerable to oppressive governments and systems. Jesus' verbal lessons often needed interpretation, even for his disciples. But his presence spoke for itself. This is the essence of mission co-work: walking alongside, mutually being present together.

We are so grateful to you that, because of your prayers and your financial support for our ministry, we are able to be part of God's mission in Malawi. We are grateful that, during this time of transition in our lives, with a new baby on the way, we are able to spend some time in the U.S. for a few months. Please pray for us as we share about this ministry with local congregations here in the U.S. Being present in people's homes, in Sunday lunches, and in worship gives us a powerful sense of being connected with our family of supporters. Our continued service depends on your continued support. Thank you!

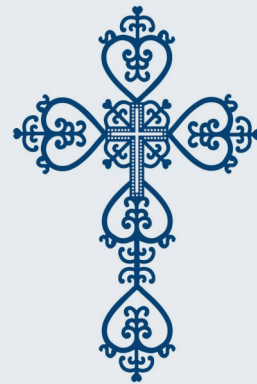
*Ambuye akudalitseni* (God bless you),  
Luta (for Jeremy and family)  
Luta Garbat-Welch ([luta.garbat-welch@pcusa.org](mailto:luta.garbat-welch@pcusa.org))  
Jeremy Garbat-Welch ([jeremy.garbat-welch@pcusa.org](mailto:jeremy.garbat-welch@pcusa.org))



“We are called to serve God by living holistic lives of faith and health, and sharing God's message of wholeness to others, We hope that through our lives and work that we will help others live lives of wholeness and healing for others and the world.”



## *Baptisms*



On April 17, 2016, the baptism of

*Nolan Benjamin Remley*

born November 10, 2015

Proud parents are Irene and Ryan Remley

On April 24, 2016, the baptism of

*Ellis James Dorsey*

born June 21, 2015

Son of Holly (Kagle) and Bryan Dorsey.

Proud grandparents are Sandy and Paul Dorsey and  
JoAnne and Richard Kagle.

In Memory of

*Ruth Jean Hannis*

**September 14, 1927 - April 27, 2016**

Ruth Jean Hannis of Bowie, Maryland passed on Wednesday, April 27, 2016. Jean is the wife of George W. Hannis, Jr.; mother of Jennifer J. Anderson and her husband, Richard and Leslie A. Hannis; sister of the late Betty Messman and Wilma Maloney; grandmother of George W. and Rachel L. Anderson.

Family and friends will gather at the Robert E. Evans Funeral Home on Monday, May 2, 2016 from 2 to 4 and 6 to 8 PM where a funeral service will be held at 12 Noon on Tuesday, May 3, 2016. Interment will follow at Lakemont Memorial Gardens. In Lieu of flowers, Memorial contributions may be made to the Alzheimer's Association (800) 272-3900 [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org) or to the charity of your choice.

## **CCPC Telephones**

The CCPC telephones have been down since April 8, 2016, and will be down until sometime after the Verizon strike is over. We apologize for the inconvenience.



You may contact us by email at:

Robin = [ccpcbowie@verizon.net](mailto:ccpcbowie@verizon.net)

Justin = [ccpcdirced@verizon.net](mailto:ccpcdirced@verizon.net)

James = [ccpcpastor@verizon.net](mailto:ccpcpastor@verizon.net)

You may also contact James by cell phone at 240-620-3943

# *African Mission Dinner & Program*



CCPC supports missionaries Jeremy and Luta Garbat-Welch, who serve in the Malawi and Zimbabwe region of Africa. Luta will be visiting our area. The Mission Council will be hosting a dinner and program for Luta on

**Friday, May 6, 2016 at  
7:00 PM in Dodds Hall**

In addition to Luta's presentation there will be singing, great African food (and a few American dishes), and lots of fun! Kids are welcome.

## *Church*



## *League!*

Come out to one of CCPC's softball games and show your support!

**May 3rd at 6:30 & 7:30 PM**

CCPC vs St. Paul's Lutheran at Black Sox Field #1

**May 10th at 8:30 & 9:30 PM**

CCPC vs City Church at Allen Pond Field #2

**May 17th at 6:30 & 7:30 PM**

St. Matthews vs CCPC at Allen Pond Field #1

**May 24th at 6:30 & 7:30 PM**

Mt. Oak vs CCPC at Black Sox Field #1



# *Gadabouts*

The Gadabouts will meet Tuesday, **May 3rd**, in the Adult Ed Conference Room for our regular monthly meeting. Beverages and cookies/cakes will be provided.

# *Tiger Lilies*

Tiger Lilies is taking a **break until September 12th**. There will be no meetings in May, June, July, and August. Contact Andrea Brassard at 301-352-0075 for summer reading suggestions.

# *Mother's Day*

## **Volunteers Needed!**

Mother's Day is May 8th. We are looking to give all of our Moms a Sunday off from teaching as a thank you for all of their hard work this year! So, we are asking some of our **men to step up and help us give our hard-working teachers the day off!**

If you are willing to teach class on this day, please contact Justin Devine (ccpcdirced@verizon.net or 707-344-3325).

Age groups are under 3, Pre—K, K—2nd, and 3rd—5th

# *Adult Education Classes*

## **Adult Education Conference Room**

at

**9:30 AM**

Will the election of 2016 be a critical election?

On **May 1st**, Wayne Smith will discuss critical election theory and how that applies to American political history, 1796-2016.

Mary Brock will be leading a three-week series on the topic of Judeo-Christian religion. The classes will be on Sunday's May 8th, 22nd, and 29th.

**May 8th** is about the history of Judeo-Christian ideology.

**May 22nd** will be the results of the survey and a discussion with Rabbi Steve to get a Jewish response.

**May 29th** is "How does the current use of 'Judeo-'Christian' relate to the idea of an American civil religion?"



# *Imagine Yoga & Wellness Center*

## Karma Yoga

**Free all-level class on Sundays (May 1, 15, and 22) at 4:00 PM**

Imagine supports Women's Shelters in the DC Metro area by bringing yoga classes to the women and children staying there. There are always lots of needs at the shelters, not the least of being yoga mats! This weekly class is FREE, with a suggested \$5 donation that we use to purchase yoga supplies and anything else we feel could be useful. We are delighted by the gifts of yoga clothes, blocks, DVD's etc. given by our loving yogis who exemplify the true meaning of yoga— the union of all! 60 minutes, taught by Imagine teachers donating their time. Remember karma: what goes around, comes around!

## Month of May

May is "Bring your mother to class for free" month!



For general inquiries or appointments,  
e-mail [Info@ImagineThePlace.com](mailto:Info@ImagineThePlace.com) or call 443-510-6308

## *Friendly Reminder!*

# **CCPC's 1st Annual Golf Tournament**

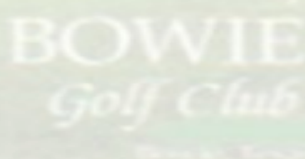
CCPC's 1st Annual Golf Tournament will be held at the Bowie Golf Club. This tournament benefits the 2016 Mission Trip to Mexico and the CCPC Youth Ministries.

**Saturday, May 7, 2016**

Trifold flyers with all the details are on the table in the Atrium and various places throughout the church.

If you would like one emailed or sent by regular mail, please contact Robin in the church office at [ccpcbowie@verizon.net](mailto:ccpcbowie@verizon.net).

Questions concerning this event should go to Justin Devine at 707-344-3325 or [ccpcdirced@verizon.net](mailto:ccpcdirced@verizon.net)





*"The source of human love is the mother."*

*~ African proverb ~*

*The loveliest masterpiece of the heart of  
God is the love of a Mother.*

*~ St. Therese of Lisieux ~*

*She opens her mouth with wisdom,  
and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.*

*~ Proverbs 31:26 ~*





# Christian Community Presbyterian Church



3120 Belair Drive  
Bowie, MD 20715  
Phone (301) 262-6008  
Fax (301) 262-5177  
Web: <http://ccpc.bowiemd.org>  
E-mail: [ccpcbowie@verizon.net](mailto:ccpcbowie@verizon.net)



CCPC, the first Protestant church in Levitt Bowie, was born from a passion for Christian mission in the local community, and this focus continues.

*Our Mission: To worship God, to grow in faith and community, and to place our gifts in the service of Jesus Christ.*



## Belair Cooperative Nursery School

The school is a non-profit, non-sectarian, and non-partisan organization. It's located in the CE Building of Christian Community Presbyterian Church.

Call 301-464-5782 or Email [info@belaircoop.org](mailto:info@belaircoop.org)

[www.belaircoop.org](http://www.belaircoop.org)



## Imagine - Yoga & Wellness Center



Located in the CE building, offers yoga and a variety of wellness programs to CCPC members and the community. For more information, visit [www.ImagineThePlace.com](http://www.ImagineThePlace.com), call 443-510-6308, or e-mail [info@ImagineThePlace.com](mailto:info@ImagineThePlace.com). Scholarships available.

