



APRIL 25, 2008

You can find the synod online at [www.lakesandprairies.org](http://www.lakesandprairies.org) and on MySpace at [www.myspace.com/synodoflakesandprairies](http://www.myspace.com/synodoflakesandprairies).

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1. REGISTRATION MATERIALS ONLINE FOR SYNOD SCHOOL '08: "Coloring Outside the Lines," the theme for this year's Synod School, is a look at how the church might move beyond timidity and try new things. The Rev. Scott Nesbitt, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Clinton, Iowa, will challenge those at Synod School to become like little children who can paint a picture with bold colors and call it beautiful even though almost every boundary has been completely disregarded. The week is designed for laity and clergy, individuals and families. Classes and activities are available for adults, youth and children – some separately, some are intergenerational – to stretch the mind and nurture the soul.



As one individual noted after last summer's Synod School, "I didn't know Presbyterians could gather together and have fun." Another described Synod School as "an unexpected spiritual awakening – wow!" The Synod School catalog and registration forms are posted online at [www.lakesandprairies.org/school.html](http://www.lakesandprairies.org/school.html).



**2. HILLCREST GROWING IN SERVICE TO CHILDREN, FAMILIES:** Hillcrest Family Services, headquartered in Dubuque, Iowa, which opened in 1896 offering adoption services, now provides a myriad of services to troubled adolescents, families and adults with serious mental illness.

Serving more than 14,000 people each year, it is the only child and family agency of its type related to the Iowa Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church and the Synod of Lakes and Prairies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Writing in the agency's most-recent newsletter, Gary Gansemer, president, noted, "A 17-year-old young man in our residential education program, who has been with us nearly two years, will be leaving soon to go out on his own. ... [H]e will leave with a stronger relationship with Christ, because of his relationship with our chaplain." The newsletter and Gary's complete column can be found on page 3 at <http://www.hillcrest-fs.org/PDF/Spring%20Newsletter.pdf>.



**3. MINNESOTA VALLEYS CHURCHES MAKE MAPLE SYRUP:** Congregants from Crosslake (Minn.) Presbyterian Church and First Presbyterian Church in Brainerd, Minn., came together in March and April to collect maple tree sap at Presbyterian Clearwater Forest to make maple syrup. The outcome benefits the camp and campers. Over 35 "missionaries" from the two congregations worked side by side to tap and harvest 300 trees and 2,000 gallons of sap, collecting sap about every three days. Dave Fischer and Don Hoger of Crosslake were the co-captains. Proceeds from the sale of the syrup at upcoming pancake breakfasts will be used by the churches to underwrite camp scholarships for their youth. Clearwater's

proceeds will be used for its general operating budget. Bottles can be purchased at the camp. Clearwater Forest can be found on the Web at [www.clearwaterforest.org](http://www.clearwaterforest.org).

**4. IOWA MINISTER GETS 'LETTER WRITER OF YEAR' AWARD:** The Rev. Anne-Marie Hislop, pastor at St. Andrew Presbyterian Church in Davenport, Iowa, was named the 2007 Letter Writer of the Year by the Quad City Times. Reporter Mark Ridolfi wrote, "Anne-Marie Hislop serves as a social conscience of our letters pages. A careful reading of her letters and posts suggests her writings are as much ministry as commentary. An example is her March letter in response to an editorial on forgiveness. 'All too often people spend months or years demanding apologies or penance from those who have hurt them when such things can never really heal the pain. ... Forgiving is refusing to let our victimizers continue to take a toll on our lives, happiness, and energy long beyond that actual injury.'" The complete article can be found at <http://www.qctimes.com/articles/2007/12/29/opinion/letters/doc4777111cce9bd173642229.txt>. (From the April 24 issue of *Out and About*, the newsletter of the Presbytery of East Iowa.)

**5. IOWA CHURCH LOOKS FOR CHANCE TO 'PAY IT FORWARD:'** The First Presbyterian Church of Algona, Iowa, is looking for another Presbyterian congregation that will be celebrating its founding – a centennial celebration, or one of 125 or 150 years – in 2009 or 2010. First Presbyterian in Algona noted that it has been "richly blessed as we celebrated our sesquicentennial and would like to pass along a financial blessing to kick-

start plans for a celebration for another congregation. You might think that you don't need any help and you can do it for yourselves, but this might be a way to get some seed money to start planning with, and the blessing can be 'paid forward.'" If you know of a congregation that will be celebrating, please contact the Rev. Dave Ullom by email at [presby@mchsi.com](mailto:presby@mchsi.com), by calling 515-295-2226 or 515-341-0132, or by writing to him at First Presbyterian Church, Algona, IA 50511. *(From the April 18 issue of e-news, a newsletter of the Presbytery of North Central Iowa.)*

**6. MISSION PARTNERSHIPS SLATES 'HOW-TO' DISCUSSIONS:** Beginning with the May 27 meeting of the Milwaukee Presbytery, Mission Partnerships will begin a series of 'how-to' mission discussions, opening with the first topic, "Alternative Christmas Markets." Two churches with established programs will review their perspectives on how to develop and sustain a successful alternative market. The informal discussion will take place during dinner at the presbytery meeting, making the event open to all. *(From the April 18 issue of Presbytery Notes, the newsletter of the Presbytery of Milwaukee.)*

**7. TCA TASK FORCE PROVIDES ACCESSIBILITY OPTIONS:** Is your church seeking to be more welcoming to persons with disabilities? The Disabilities Concerns Task Force of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area has resources available for congregations who want to be accessible in many different ways. Additional information about the task force and the resources can be found at <http://www.ptcaweb.org/COMM/disability%20concerns.htm>. *(From the April 18 issue of Friday Bytes, a newsletter of the Presbytery of Twin Cities Area.)*

**8. 'FESTIVAL OF HOMILETICS' COMES TO TWIN CITIES IN MAY:** The "Festival of Homiletics: Transformational Preaching!" is coming to the Twin Cities May 19-23 at Westminster Presbyterian Church and Central Lutheran Church, both in Minneapolis. The 2007 Festival drew 1,700 pastors from all denominations to Nashville, Tenn. The speakers list for this year's festival is long and distinguished, and the week will include liturgical, blended, and jazz worship. Information regarding the festival can be found at [www.goodpreacher.com/festival](http://www.goodpreacher.com/festival).

**9. LITURGY, LIFE CONFERENCE SET IN IOWA:** The Rev. Chip Andrus, an instrumental leader in the "emerging worship" movement in mainline churches, will lead a "Liturgy and Life Conference" Friday and Saturday, May 30-31, First Presbyterian Church in Fort Dodge, Iowa. The conference is a cooperative effort of the North Central Iowa and Prospect Hill presbyteries. Registration information can be obtained by contacting the Presbytery of North Central Iowa at 2302 Falls Ave., Waterloo, IA 50701, or calling 319.233.1747 or 800.383.3617.



**10. WORKSHOP ON ECUMENICAL EFFORTS SET FOR RURAL CHURCHES:** A two-day workshop, "Rural Churches: Ecumenical Community Service and Ministry," designed for pastors and lay leadership, is slated twice during May at two locations in Minnesota. The workshops are sponsored by the Minnesota Council of Churches. The first workshop is set May 14-15 at Paynesville Lutheran Church and the second workshop is May 21-22 at Medelia United Methodist Church. Details and registration materials can be found at <http://www.mnchurches.org/programs/partnerships/rural/ruraworkshop.html>.



**11. IRMS SETS 'RE:IMAGE' WORKSHOP IN AUGUST:** Rodger Nishioka, associate professor of Christian education at Columbia Theological Seminary, will present two breakout sessions at Iowa Religious Media Services

"Re: Image" workshop Aug. 16 in Des Moines, Iowa. Nishioka, whose sessions are titled "Working with Junior High Kids," is widely recognized for his groundbreaking research into the departure of teens and young adults from mainline churches. More details about the workshop can be found at [www.irms.org](http://www.irms.org).

**12. CALVIN CREST SLATES PLANS FOR 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY:** Camp Calvin Crest, Fremont, Neb., has planned a full slate of activities for the whole family to celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Aug. 22-24. Activities will include a reunion for adult-aged campers, directors and counselors, games and activities, a barbecue lunch, a silent auction and quilt auction, social times, and worship. More information about the event can be found at [http://www.calvincrest.org/50\\_Years\\_Of\\_Ministry.php](http://www.calvincrest.org/50_Years_Of_Ministry.php).

**13. UNITED SETS SPIRITUALITY, ARTS INSTITUTE:** United Theological Seminary in New Brighton, Minn., has slated its Summer Institute in Spirituality and the Arts June 9-13, offering participants a chance to do, learn and explore the intersections between art and religion. A complete description and information on early registration discounts can be found at [www.unitedseminary.edu/summerinstitute](http://www.unitedseminary.edu/summerinstitute).

**14. KOSTER BECOMES FIRST CHALLENGER TO GRADYE PARSONS:** The Rev. Edward H. Koster, stated clerk of Detroit Presbytery, has announced that he will stand for election as General Assembly stated clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Koster is the first announced challenger to the nominee of the Assembly's Stated Clerk Nomination Committee, the Rev. Gradye Parsons, who is currently associate stated clerk and director of operations for the Office of the General Assembly. The election will take place June 27 during the 218th PC(USA) General Assembly in San Jose, Calif. The complete story can be found at [www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08312.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08312.htm).

**15. STUDY PACK FOR GA AVAILABLE FOR COMMISSIONERS, CHURCHES:** A downloadable Bible study pack for the upcoming General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is now available through [www.thethoughtfulchristian.com](http://www.thethoughtfulchristian.com) and the Office of the General Assembly. The 2008 Presbyterian General Assembly Study Pack is for all commissioners to the 218th GA slated June 21-28 in San Jose, Calif., and for churches to use before, during and after the meeting. This complete story can be found at [www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08294.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08294.htm).

**16. MISSION TRIP OPPORTUNITY FOR OPENS FOR YOUTH:** A large group has had to cancel its participation in this summer's Mt. Vernon Group Workcamp, a mission of First Presbyterian Church of Mt. Vernon, Ill., opening space in the youth mission for additional participants, according to the Rev. Rob Dyer. He wrote, "I would like to invite you to consider a calling for your youth groups to attend a Group Workcamp Mission Trip in Mt. Vernon ... Over 400 youth and their leaders will gather for a week of spiritual formation as we repair 50-75 homes and enjoy meaningful fellowship." The week of the trip is June 15-21. More information about the trip can be found at [www.mtvgroupworkcamp.com](http://www.mtvgroupworkcamp.com) or through the church's Web site at <http://www.fpcmv.com>.

**17. FINALISTS ANNOUNCED FOR 'BEST CHRISTIAN WORKPLACES:'** The Best Christian Workplaces Institute and Christian Management Association have announced the Best Christian Workplaces in the US Finalists for 2008. The finalists were determined by a survey administered by the institute that involved more than 7,834 employees in 67 organizations across the United States. Based on the survey, people love to work for the Best Christian Workplaces for two reasons: the cause and the culture. The lists of finalists and information about the survey can be found at [www.bcwinstitute.com](http://www.bcwinstitute.com).