



AUGUST 2007

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1. PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE BUSY ACROSS SYNOD: Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has had a busy summer across the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. August opened with the collapse of the I35W bridge in Minneapolis and within the past week floods, resulting from heavy rains, devastated parts of three presbyteries. The presbyteries of John Knox, Twin Cities Area and North Central Iowa are all in contact with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and beginning to mobilize response activities following the floods in southeastern Minnesota, western Wisconsin and north central Iowa. On Wednesday, Ken Meunier, transition associate executive presbyter in the John Knox Presbytery, issued a memo identifying immediate needs and contact individuals within the presbytery. To read the complete memo, go to www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/MEUNIER-FLOOD-MEMO.pdf. Churches that have volunteers who may be willing to help with recovery efforts are encouraged to develop lists of prospective volunteers, lists of volunteers who have special skills, and dates when those volunteers may be able to help. That information can be forwarded to the John Knox Presbytery office at 1-800-424-7935. Financial gifts may be made to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance through your local congregation or directly by credit card by calling PresbyTel at (800) 872-3283 or online at www.pcusa.org/pda/donate.htm. Gifts can be designated to Disaster Relief – Midwest Floods-DR000015. Several newspaper Web sites have updated information on the flooding.

A partial list includes www.postbulletin.com, www.madison.com/wsj, www.lacrossetribune.com, www.winonadailynews.com, www.startribune.com, and www.twincities.com. The latter two Web sites also have continued coverage of the bridge collapse.

2. PTCA UPDATES FLOOD INFORMATION: In a Presbytery of the Twin Cities Email Alert, Dennis Sanders, communications specialist for the presbytery, wrote in part: "We wanted to let you know the latest updates on the flooding in the Upper Midwest as well as ways that you can help. As of Friday morning, all of the PTCA churches in the affected area (Southern Minnesota) have reported in. Some congregations and church members are dealing with flooded basements, but not much more. We have not received any requests for assistance from our own churches, but if we do, we will let everyone in the Presbytery know." Sanders continued, "As we see the tragedy of the late summer floods unfold in print and electronic media, we are wondering how we can help. There are several things you can do to help those in the affected areas, especially in the John Knox Presbytery. ... John Knox will need some crews at a few churches in their area. Chatfield, Lewiston and Utica churches (all in Minnesota) will need work crews to help remove carpet and clean prior to Sunday's Worship. Each of these churches had flooding in their basements. The hope is to have the insurance adjusters inspect the sites today so work can begin on Thursday or Friday. **Contact Cindy Timm 507-523-3637.** Utica is seeking child-care for the community to allow adults to work on helping each other clear out basements and begin repairs. Coordinate with **Doug Rosendahl 608-687-5433 or Cindy Timm 507-523-3637.**"

3. WEB SITE, MYSPACE CREATE NEW WAYS TO COMMUNICATE: The Synod of Lakes and Prairies updated and added to its online presence during August, developing a new design for its Web site, www.lakesandprairies.org, and uploading its own MySpace page. The MySpace page can be found at www.myspace.com/synodoflakesandprairies. "Comments concerning the new design for the Web site have been positive to this point," Duane Sweep, associate for communications, said. "We are looking for ideas to replace the photograph on the home page," he added, noting comments have indicated the stained glass is "too old fashioned." The MySpace page is a new venture, too. "Too many people for us to ignore, both young and old, are on MySpace," Sweep said. "The denomination even has a MySpace page." During the past week, the blog – short for Web Log – on the synod's MySpace page has been devoted to the response to the recent flooding.

4. PRESBYTERIANS FIND WAYS TO EARN A 'MISSION' RETURN: There has been a lot of press in the last few years about Socially Responsible Investing or SRI. A growing number of individuals, churches and religious organizations are investing in a manner that expresses values – not just returns. Some individuals, churches and other religious organizations are proactively searching for investments in companies and organizations whose mission makes a difference. One proactive option for Presbyterians – members, pastors, churches and middle governing bodies – is to invest a portion of their savings, reserve accounts or endowment funds in term notes with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment & Loan Program. Money invested in this program is used to make low-cost loans to Presbyterian congregations who are building, expanding or reshaping their ministry space. The investors earn a competitive rate of interest plus a "mission" return – knowing that their investments are growing churches. Information or an offering circular about the Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program can be obtained by calling Ben Blake at (800) 903-7457, ext. 5865, or by email at bblake@ctr.pcusa.org. More information can also be found on the Web site at www.pcusa.org/pilp.

5. SYNOD SCHOOL, PW GATHERING PICS NOW ONLINE: Photographs from the Presbyterian Women's Gathering in July at Buena Vista University and a slide show created by the Spirituality class at Synod School 2007 have been uploaded to the synod's Web site. The Presbyterian Women's slides can be found at <http://www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/PRESBY-WOMEN-2007.pdf>. The Synod School slide show is located at <http://web.mac.com/d.tomes/iWeb/Tomesphoto/synod%20school.html>. Please allow time for the pictures and slide show to load.

6. MODERATOR ASKS: WHERE'S THE CONVERSATION?: In a message to the denomination, the Rev. Joan S. Gray, moderator of the 217th General Assembly, wrote, "Over the last 13 months, I have had the privilege of traveling our country and meeting Presbyterians in many states. All in all, I can testify that our small part of the body of Christ is moving forward in serving God at home and abroad. There is one thing, however, that I had hoped to find as I traveled but, by and large, have not. The Task Force on Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church presented seven recommendations to the 217th General Assembly last summer. Recommendation number two commends to the church-at-large the process the task force used to conduct its work. This process involves bringing together a group of people with different theological views and engaging in a committed program of worship, study, honest conversation, and prayer. ... My disappointment is that I have not found many presbyteries or churches where groups are meeting to do this kind of work. In fact, the attitude generally seems to be, 'What good does it do? It won't solve our issues.'" The complete text of her message can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07515.htm.

7. VALENTINE, FARRELL SEEK PARTICIPATION IN MISSION CHALLENGE '07: In a note to middle governing body executives Aug. 21, Linda Valentine, executive director of the General Assembly Council, and Hunter Farrell, director of world mission, wrote in part: "These are exciting days. Paradigms are changing. We, who serve you in the General Assembly Council offices, join with you in discerning how to best meet the needs of our members amid changing trends and contexts. One amazing outcome is what we have learned as we prepare for Mission Challenge '07. The most encouraging learning is that Presbyterians want to connect with the mission of the church. They want to hear the stories of mission and, if possible, meet those who carry out mission face to face. ... Our challenge is to respond to the expectations of a new generation of Presbyterian givers while upholding a Presbyterian and Reformed understanding of stewardship. In sum, we want a chance to recover Presbyterian benevolence dollars for Presbyterian mission. To that end, we are retooling our interpretation strategies and funding systems in order respond to the new giving patterns of our members. Mission Challenge '07 is a campaign aimed at reconnecting Presbyterian congregations with Presbyterian missionaries. The "challenge" is for every congregation to connect with at least one mission co-worker in prayer, correspondence, and financial support. Based on a pilot program in Yellowstone Presbytery, we set out to create a mass mission itineration in October 2007. The goal was set high - 120 presbyteries in one month. To our surprise and delight, 143 presbyteries have committed to host a PC(USA) missionary for a week. We conclude that our people really do want to hear good news about what the Presbyterian Church is doing in mission." More details about Mission Challenge '07 can be found at <http://www.pcusa.org/missionchallenge07/>.

8. TORNADO RECOVERY EFFORTS CONTINUE IN EAST IOWA: The East Iowa Presbytery has joined with the ELCA, United Methodist, and UCC disaster assistance entities in awarding matching \$5,000 contributions to the Muscatine-Louisa Disaster Recovery Committee. Muscatine and Louisa counties within the Presbytery of East Iowa were struck by a tornado in June. Rebecca Blair, stated clerk for the presbytery, wrote, "We anticipate

that the remainder of the initial \$10,000 from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance will fund two to three cases involving immediate large-scale needs." Blair, who also serves on the disaster recovery committee, went on to note, "At this point, since FEMA refused to declare the area an approved federal disaster site, [the committee] is assessing comprehensive community needs. We anticipate that further funding will be necessary, but we do not have a clear sense of the scale of need at this point since the self-sufficient Iowans in the area are reticent to let us know of any needs they have that require significant funding."

9. 'THE PURPOSE OF LIFE:' A MESSAGE FROM PC(USA)'S VICE MODERATOR: Robert Wilson, elder and vice-moderator of the 217th General Assembly, recently wrote about God's purpose for our lives. He begins: "Everything that God created has a purpose - the sun, clouds, rain, trees, animals, insects, and fish. Regardless of how large or small, we were all born to accomplish a certain task. It is the knowledge of that purpose that enables every soul to fulfill itself. One person with knowledge of his or her life's purpose is more powerful than ten thousand working without that knowledge. It is important for each of us to figure out why we were put here on this earth by God. The importance of life is to accomplish the task we were given. Without working on this task, life is meaningless." The complete message can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07509.htm.

10. U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT PUTS JAMESTOWN COLLEGE IN TOP TIER: In rankings released Aug. 17, U.S. News & World Report's 2007 edition of "America's Best Colleges" includes Jamestown College as one of the top tier baccalaureate colleges in the Midwest region. This latest achievement follows the announcement of the public phase of a \$30 million capital campaign which boasts an expected \$20 million increase in endowment as well as several new building projects. The complete story can be found at www.jc.edu/campus/campusClips.php.

11. HILLCREST FAMILY SERVICES FILLS TWO POSITIONS: Hillcrest Family Services, a ministry of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), has named the Rev. Ken Gibson and Mindy Sampson to its staff. The Rev. Gibson and Sampson fill positions in the newly renamed Office of Mission Advancement at Hillcrest as vice president of mission advancement and public relations coordinator, respectively. Gibson is an ordained Lutheran minister who spent seven years at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque. Sampson has worked at Hillcrest for two years, managing the Tobacco-Free coalition. She has experience working with high school youth, working with volunteers and writing grants. Hillcrest Family Services enhances the lives of children, families and adults in need by teaching skills and providing information and resources. More information about Hillcrest can be found at www.hillcrest-fs.org.

12. UNIVERSITY OF DUBUQUE SEMINARY BEGINS DISTANCE-DEGREE PROGRAM: On Aug. 4 a full cohort of students representing three denominations and 12 presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) enrolled as the inaugural class of the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary's Distance Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree program. UDTS is the first seminary of the denomination to offer a Master of Divinity distance education program. This 5-year program allows participants to take the majority of classes via the Internet. Two-thirds of the courses are taught online, while the remaining credits are earned in residency on the Dubuque campus. A complete description of the program can be found on the seminary's Web site -- <http://udts.dbq.edu/distance/index.htm>.

13. DES MOINES PRESBYTERY SPONSORS 'HEALTHY CONGREGATION' WORKSHOP: Des Moines Presbytery will sponsor a "Healthy Congregations Workshop" Oct. 26-27 at Ankeny (IA) Presbyterian Church. The workshop will train leaders how to be positive

influences on their congregations by applying family systems theory to the life of the church. The workshop will be led by Lola Peters, an expert in the family systems methodology and a member of the Ankeny church.

14. PEACEMAKING EVENT SET AT TWIN CITIES AREA CHURCH: A community peacemaking event, co-sponsored by the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area, will take place Sept. 30 at the Presbyterian Church of the Apostles in Burnsville, Minn. The event will feature worship, music, speakers, exhibits, a book fair and a number of peacemaking-related workshops. There will also be activities for children and youth. Keynote speaker is the Rev. Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, a renowned author and teacher. He will speak on "Choosing a Visionary Path to Peace," in which he will address political, economic, faith and foreign policy decisions that affect hunger and poverty in the global community.

15. LIVING WATERS' MINISTRY PROMOTED ON YOUTUBE: A Presbyterian ministry that helps provide clean water to places in the world that need it most has tapped the ultra-popular video Web site YouTube.com to increase the flow of its message. Living Waters for the World, a ministry of the Synod of Living Waters of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) based in Franklin, Tenn., has posted a video on the site that explains the work it does and encourages others to join the effort. Those who visit the YouTube site will hear LWW administrator Steve Young talk about the world's critical situation involving clean water, and how the LWW "trains and equips mission teams to share the gift of clean water with communities in need." The rest of the story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07458.htm.

16. JAMESTOWN COLLEGE BENEFACTOR DIES AFTER CANCER BATTLE: Robert Grant Lyngstad, a tireless benefactor and booster of Jamestown (ND) College, died Aug. 13, following a battle with cancer. He was 81. A North Dakota native, Lyngstad long believed that North Dakota needed a private Christian college. During his life he made many gifts to Jamestown College and served on its board of trustees for a quarter-century, retiring in 2001 as vice-chair. A Presbyterian elder, Lyngstad served on sessions in Tarzana, Calif., St. Paul, Minn., and Fargo, N.D. He is survived by his wife, Lorry, three children and numerous grandchildren. A memorial service was held Aug. 16 at First Presbyterian Church of Fargo.

17. LIGHTWORKS BUYS ECUNET, PROMISES ENHANCED SERVICE: A stronger online network for Presbyterians has been promised with the recent purchase of Ecunet by Lightworks New Media, a subsidiary of Faith & Values Media, the nation's largest coalition of faith groups dedicated to enriching spiritual life through the electronic media. The new partnership will create a stronger network with an expanded set of services for members of the Ecunet online community, Lightworks officials said. The full story is at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07517.htm.

18. ANTI-HUNGER GROUP OFFERS FREE WORSHIP RESOURCES: Bread for the World (BFW), a Christian anti-hunger group, has produced new worship resources to help congregations renew their commitment to fighting hunger during an annual day of observance called "Bread for the World Sunday." Most observances this year will take place on Oct. 21, although congregations are encouraged to choose any Sunday between World Food Day (Oct. 16) and Thanksgiving (Nov. 22). The complete story is at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07511.htm.

19. REV. DAVID HANCOCK DIES IN MINNEAPOLIS AUG. 1: The Rev. David C. Hancock, a longtime leader in Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) efforts to minister with people suffering alcohol and drug addictions, died Aug. 1 in a Minneapolis nursing home. He

was 93. A graduate of Hanover (IN) College and McCormick Theological Seminary, Hancock was ordained to the ministry in 1951. Believing he had "failed miserably" to help parishioners overcome alcohol and drug problems, Hancock left parish ministry in 1964 to devote himself to alcohol and drug abuse prevention. He led alcoholism councils in Lincoln, Neb., and St. Paul, Minn., and was a co-founder and leader of the national non-profit Prevention of Alcohol Problems. The rest of the story is located at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07488.htm.

20. WCC SEEKS CANDIDATES FOR 2008 INTERNSHIPS: The World Council of Churches (WCC) is accepting applications from young people between the ages of 18 and 30 years to serve as interns in its Geneva offices from February 2008 to January 2009. Application deadline for the five internships is Sept. 20. The goals of the program are to bring experience to the WCC and to engage in ecumenical learning. The complete story is at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07487.htm. More information about the WCC internship program can be found at www.oikoumene.org/?id=3187.

21. DUDLEY APPOINTED TO NEBRASKA TELECOM COMMISSION: Nebraska Gov. Dave Heineman has appointed Hastings College President Phillip Dudley, Jr., to the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission. Dudley will serve a three and a half-year term. The commission oversees the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications statewide public broadcasting network of radio and television stations. Hastings College can be found online at www.hastings.edu.

22. GAC's COMMUNICATIONS, FUNDS DEVELOPMENT STAFF REORGANIZED: The General Assembly Council's executive committee has approved a restructuring of the Communications and Funds Development (CFD) office that supports the Council's mission and ministry programs. Karen Schmidt, deputy executive director for communications and funds development, described the changes as responsive to the new organization of the Council staff, which was approved by the Council at its September 2006 meeting, and to the biennial Mission Work Plan goals and objectives of the Council. Get the rest of the story at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07468.htm.