



# Keeping in Touch

An e-newsletter for ministry partners in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies

## AUGUST 1, 2008

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

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## 1. NEED FOR HELP CONTINUES IN EAST

**IOWA:** The flood update on the home page of the East Iowa Presbytery's Web site begins, "Vinton, Cedar Rapids, Iowa City, Oakville and towns in between are shoveling their way through the muck out process and soon it will be time to begin the rebuilding phase. We really need your help! Please consider either volunteering to work or sending in a donation or gift card from Menards, The Home Depot or Lowe's." The site also contains listings of opportunities to help and a number of picture albums. The site is located at [www.peia.org](http://www.peia.org). ([Return to top.](#))

## 2. NORTH CENTRAL IOWA POSTS UPDATE:

Kaylene Hoskins, disaster assistance coordinator in the Presbytery of North Central Iowa, reported in the most recent presbyter newsletter: "As we increase our areas of coverage, our need for volunteers is still great. If you would like to volunteer in our presbytery or organize a work group for the week or a day, please call the presbytery office [319.233.1747]. We are involved in long term recovery committees in many areas of the presbytery. Some of these committees are just forming." Her complete report can be found at <http://presbynciowa.org/stuff/Weekly%20Enews%207-31-08.pdf>. ([Return to top.](#))

## 3. WRISTBAND OFFERS REMINDER OF HOPE:

"See what you started, Lance Armstrong?" So begins a story by Jeff Raasch of The Gazette of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The story continued, "The wristband fad initiated by the cycling star for cancer awareness has taken form in Eastern Iowa, but with a different color and meaning. Blue silicone bands with the inscription 'Out of Chaos, Hope' were handed out Sunday to members at Westminster Presbyterian Church." The story was reprinted in the July 25 issue of the E-News

## Presbyterian Center space

### Upcoming Events

- [11.](#) **Re:image event set in Iowa this month**
- [12.](#) **Communicators conference set in Illinois**
- [13.](#) **Seminary plans 'Vital Christianity' academy this fall**

of North Central Iowa Presbytery and it can be found at <http://presbynciowa.org/stuff/Weekly%20E-News%207-24-08.pdf>. ([Return to top.](#))

#### **4. PASTOR GETS FIRST-HAND LOOK AT MUCK**

**OUT:** The Rev. Andrew Hilla, pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Paullina, Iowa, got a first-hand look at a "muck out" in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. His comments were included in the July 23 edition of the E-News of Prospect Hill Presbytery. He noted that clean up will be going on "for many years to come." His complete article can be found at [www.prospecthillpresby.org/e\\_news/july23\\_2008.pdf](http://www.prospecthillpresby.org/e_news/july23_2008.pdf). ([Return to top.](#))

**5. DIVERSE GROUP DISCUSSES MINISTRY:** Nineteen leaders in racial ethnic ministry within the Twin Cities Area Presbytery shared the struggles and successes of their efforts when they gathered at the Minnesota Church Center in Minneapolis July 28. And they hope to continue meeting.

Organizers of the event – the presbytery and the Synod of Lakes and Prairies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) – scheduled the luncheon meeting as a means to start a dialogue among racial ethnic ministry leaders, according to Elona Street-Stewart, associate for racial ethnic ministries at the synod.

Before inviting everyone to offer introductions and greetings, Street-Stewart noted that it was an honor to greet them, adding, "Some of you probably don't even know one another, so I'm excited to welcome you all together."

The Rev. Michael Ngeru Kamau, pastor of the Kenyan Christian Outreach Fellowship in St. Paul that became the presbytery's first immigrant fellowship in July, talked about the challenges he faced in transferring his membership from the Presbytery of Nairobi to the Twin Cities Area. But he went on to note the growth of his Kenyan congregation and he called this week's gathering "a very encouraging thing."

The Rev. Stephen Muhia, leader of the African Fellowship at the Presbyterian Church of the Master in Coon Rapids, Minn., said the meeting provided the opportunity learn and borrow from one another.

And the Rev. Alika Galloway, co-pastor at Kwanzaa Community Presbyterian pointed out the need "to discover what influences our preparation for urban ministry and then challenge that process."

While no one at the meeting wanted to formalize the structure of the group into a committee, a large proportion of those present expressed a views similar to Muhia, who noted, "This is a good forum. I pray that we have more forums of this type."

The Rev. Jin Kim, pastor at Church of All Nations in Minneapolis, a diverse congregation where, he said, "everyone is a minority," called on the group to serve in an advisory capacity to "the whole presbytery." He said the minority voice can be lost when only one individual represents the minority view on a presbytery committee.

While informal, the group, he said, could act in a similar capacity to the PC(USA)'s Advocacy Committee on Racial Ethnic Concerns, which advocates and monitors the implementation of policy and corresponding actions, decisions, and issues of racial ethnic concern.

Street-Stewart and the Rev. Bob Cuthill, interim executive presbyter for Twin Cities Area, noting the enthusiasm within the group, called for another gathering within the next two months. ([Return to top.](#))

**6. JIN KIM'S SERMON POSTED ON SYNOD SITE:** The Rev. Jin Kim, pastor of the Church of All Nations in Minneapolis, preached at the June 24 worship service of the 218th General Assembly in San Jose, Calif., calling Christians to "lay down their sword of power and privilege and to walk humbly with God." He said, "Racism remains the mega-idolatry in the meta-narrative of American history." The complete text of Kim's sermon can be found <http://www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/GA%20Sermon%2006-24-08%20Jin%20S%20%20Kim.pdf>. ([Return to top.](#))

**7. PRESBYTERIANS HELP OUT FOLLOWING POSTVILLE RAID:** Back in May, the kosher meat processing plant in Postville, Iowa, was raided by federal agents, seeking illegal immigrants. The Washington Post story described it this way: "Antonio Escobedo ran to get his wife Monday when he saw a helicopter circling overhead and immigration agents approaching the meatpacking plant where they both work.

The couple hid for hours inside the plant before obtaining refuge in the pews and hall at St. Bridget's Catholic Church, where hundreds of other Guatemalan and Mexican families gathered, hoping to avoid arrest. ... [The] raid on the Agriprocessors plant, in which 389 immigrants were arrested and many held at a cattle exhibit hall, was the ... largest crackdown on illegal workers at a single site. It has upended this tree-lined community, which calls itself 'Hometown to the World.'"

The effects of the raid still continue for families affected by the raid and others within the larger community. The Rev. Gary Catterson, pastor of Community Presbyterian Church in Postville, located in the John Knox Presbytery, noted, "Sadly our Guatemalan congregation is gone. Most of the leaders were caught up during the sweep. Those left attempted to keep it going, but were not able to do so."

Much of the direct relief assistance for those affected by the raid is taking place at St. Bridget's Catholic Church in Postville, but Catterson's congregation is also helping out. Community Presbyterian has provided volunteers at the rectory and the session has voted to contribute \$5,000 from its endowment fund, Catterson said. "We have had a collection of food taken for the food shelf as well," he added.

Contributions to the Hispanic Ministries Fund in Postville can be sent to Box 269, Postville, IA 52162. Catterson said that Community Presbyterian will also accept checks made out to Hispanic Ministries Fund and mailed to the church at Box 8, Postville, IA 52162. The rest of the Washington Post article can be found at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/>

[article/2008/05/17/AR2008051702474.html](http://article/2008/05/17/AR2008051702474.html). [\(Return to top.\)](#)

**8. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SHELTERS CHILDREN FLEEING GUNMAN:** Second Presbyterian Church in Knoxville, Tenn., became a temporary refuge July 28 for children fleeing a Unitarian church where a gunman opened fire killing two adults and leaving seven others injured. As many as two dozen children fled to Second Presbyterian during the shooting at Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church (TVUUC), which is directly adjacent to Second Presbyterian. This complete story can be found at [www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08539](http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08539). [\(Return to top.\)](#)

**9. PC(USA) LEADERS SEEK PRAYERS FOLLOWING KNOXVILLE SHOOTINGS:** Four top leaders of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have sent a letter to all of the denomination's congregations asking them to pray for those affected by the shootings in a Knoxville, Tenn., church July 27. The full text of the letter, dated July 29 and signed by the Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow, moderator of the 218th General Assembly; the Rev. Byron Wade, vice moderator of the 218th General Assembly; the Rev. Gradye Parsons, stated clerk of the General Assembly and Elder Linda Valentine, executive director of the General Assembly Council, can be found at [www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08546](http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08546). [\(Return to top.\)](#)

**10. FIRM LEASES PRESBYTERIAN CENTER SPACE:** Mortenson Construction, the firm that is building the new downtown arena in Louisville, has agreed to lease 10,000 square feet on the first floor of the Presbyterian Center for \$150,000 per year. The lease is for 30 months. The new arena, expected to be completed in November 2010 with the University of Louisville basketball team as its primary tenant, will sit directly across the street from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s national office building. Mortenson will have a separate entrance to the Presbyterian Center, providing it direct access to the arena site. The complete story can be found at [www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08525](http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08525). [\(Return to top.\)](#)



**11. RE:IMAGE CONFERENCE SET IN IOWA IN AUGUST:**

Iowa Religious Media Services in Urbandale, Iowa, a suburb of Des Moines, is planning a Re:Image Conference Saturday, Aug. 16, that will focus on tools and techniques for progressive churches. Rodger Nishioka, associate professor of Christian education at Columbia Theological Seminary, will

be the keynote speaker. Nishioka is recognized for his groundbreaking research into why teens and young adults leave the mainline church. Conference details can be found at [www.irms.org](http://www.irms.org). [\(Return to top.\)](#)

**12. REGIONAL COMMUNICATORS EVENT SET IN ILLINOIS:** The Presbyterian Communicators Network regional conference at Stronghold Camp and Conference Center in Oregon, Ill., Aug. 25-27 offers church, presbytery and synod communicators – and pastors and other staff, too – opportunities to learn and improve online and offline communication. Speakers will include a mixture of seasoned communicators and some fresh new talent as well. Worship will provide a time for meditation and communion. And the evenings will be filled with discussions prompted by the day's experiences. The final regional conference for 2008 will be in Portland, Ore., Oct. 29-31. Online registration for the conference is available at [www.pcusa.org/comnet](http://www.pcusa.org/comnet). The complete conference schedule can be found at [www.pcusa.org/comnet/schedule.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/comnet/schedule.htm). [\(Return to top.\)](#)

**13. UNITED SEMINARY ANNOUNCES 'ACADEMY FOR VITAL CHRISTIANITY:'** United Theological Seminary, New Brighton, Minn., in partnership with the Minnesota Conferences of the United Church of Christ and the United Methodist Church, announced plans to launch the "Academy for Vital Christianity," a program designed to give students an opportunity read the Bible in creative and eye-opening ways. The program, according to promotional materials, will "draw on the wisdom of 2000 years to answer questions about God and life, expand skills for leadership in a congregation, and bring faith to bear on the great needs of the world." Fall classes begin September 2008. Details and registration materials can be found at [www.unitedseminary.edu/ce/academy.asp](http://www.unitedseminary.edu/ce/academy.asp). ([Return to top.](#))