



Keeping in Touch

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

AUGUST 29, 2008

You can find the synod online at www.lakesandprairies.org or on My Space at www.myspace.com/synodoflakesandprairies.

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P R E S B Y T E R I A N C H U R C H U S A I

1. VOLUNTEERS STILL NEEDED IN EAST IOWA:

The clean-up process is complete in many homes affected by flooding earlier this year in the Presbytery of East Iowa, but

volunteers are still urgently needed to help in the reconstruction and recovery efforts. Three Presbyterian congregations in this presbytery, St. Andrew Presbyterian Church in Iowa City and Christ Church and Westminster Presbyterian Church in Cedar Rapids are hosting work groups that are coming in from around the country. Individuals or work teams are still needed. Volunteers who want to stay overnight should contact the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Call Center at 866.732.6121 or register online at the PDA Web site www.pcusa.org/pda/register/team.jsp. Volunteers who can help for one day or are interested in opportunities in other Presbytery of East Iowa locations should contact Richard Tiegs at the Presbytery of East Iowa at 319.354.9220, ext 201. ([Return to top](#))

2. DISASTER RECOVERY COORDINATOR JOINS EAST IOWA STAFF:

Sarah Dyck has joined the Presbytery of East Iowa staff as disaster recovery coordinator. She has been a member of the Disaster Recovery Task Force since its inception following the June flooding. She is also the coordinator for the overnight hospitality site at St. Andrew Presbyterian, Iowa City, designed to accommodate visiting work teams. Updated disaster recovery information can be found in the presbytery's newsletters located at www.pbyeastia.org/tp40/page.asp?ID=150996. ([Return to](#)

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3. ST. PAUL CHURCH OFFERS SANCTUARY DURING CONVENTION:

Central Presbyterian Church – <http://cpcstpaul.org> – in Downtown St. Paul, Minn., is in a unique situation. It lies

only a stone's throw from the Xcel Center, site of the 2008 Republican National Convention. It's also located on the protest route allowed by the St. Paul police department. Being in the middle of what will be media madness during the first week of September, you would think the church might decide to close its doors during the week of the convention and take an extended Labor Day break. You might think that, but you would be wrong. This complete story, written by Dennis Sanders, communications specialist for the Twin Cities Area Presbytery, can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08613. [\(Return to top\)](#)

4. HEALTHY CONGREGATIONS WORKSHOP SET IN CENTRAL NEBRASKA:

A Healthy Congregations workshop is slated Friday and Saturday, Oct. 3-4, at First Presbyterian Church in Grand Island, Neb. Led by the Rev. Dave Moore, the workshop uses the insights of family systems theory to help church leaders become more effective stewards of their congregations. The workshop design for this event was developed by the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center – www.LMPeaceCenter.org. The Rev. Moore, pastor of New Summit Presbyterian Church in Lee's Summit, Mo., works with congregations and leaders in church planting, church transformation, church health and growth, and conflict mediation. More information about the workshop and registration materials can be obtained from the Presbytery of Central Nebraska by e-mailing office@centrálnepresby.org. [\(Return to top\)](#)

5. 219th GENERAL ASSEMBLY COLA ISSUES STATUS LETTER: Sandy Hawley and Manley Olson, co-chairs for the Committee on Local Arrangements for the 219th General Assembly that will be held in Minneapolis in July 2010, issued a letter recently that provided the status of planning for the next General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Their letter is below.

"With the conclusion of the 218th General Assembly the Committee on Local Arrangements now turns its attention to July 2010. The purpose of this communication is to let you know of the status of planning for the 219th GA and to let you know how people from your presbytery might participate, should they express an interest.

"The 219th GA will be held in the Minneapolis Convention Center, July 3-10, 2010. The theme is "Rivers of Living Water," based on John 7:37b-38. Many of the major decisions are made by the Office of the General Assembly such as convention center arrangements, hotel, worship and other official activities. We may have input on some of these but OGA is in charge. A major responsibility for COLA is recruitment, training, assignments and monitoring of the 1300-1500 volunteers that will be needed to host the Assembly. We are also responsible for the location and details of the Moderator's Reception, tours and special events for YAAD's and commissioners.

"The Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys and the Presbytery of Northern Waters are partnering with the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area to host GA. Both have members on COLA and are supporting the effort financially. Our hope is to involve people from all the presbyteries in the synod to the degree they wish to, and in that regard there are several things we ask of you and your presbytery

- * Continue to pray for us
- * Let us know how your presbytery might consider being involved
- * Help us recruit volunteers when the time comes
- * Give us your ideas

"We hope that you will view the 219th GA as a way for you and folks in your presbyteries to share in the excitement of being a part of a General Assembly.

"From all the feedback we have gotten, our GA booth and invitation video at the closing session were very successful. Now that the San Jose Assembly is over we can turn to 2010. Things will be pretty quiet for the next year. We will be working on sites for the Moderator's Reception and other special events but volunteer recruitment will not begin until fall 2009.

"In order to help folks from throughout the synod to be able to volunteer we are looking at ways to minimize their costs.

"If you are willing to identify and provide volunteers, let us know and we will contact you in the future for the name of a contact person to coordinate that effort within your presbytery. For now we are asking for your ideas, both about things at San Jose that you especially liked and things you think we could improve upon. Any general thoughts about 2010 GA are also welcomed." ([Return to top](#))



6. PRESBYTERIAN CLEARWATER FOREST SETS THREE FALL RETREATS:

Presbyterian Clearwater Forest, a camp ministry of the presbyteries of Minnesota Valleys, Northern Plains, Northern Waters and Twin Cities Area, and the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, is offering three retreats this fall for junior and senior high youth. The dates are Oct. 17-19 for the Middle School Fall Retreat, "More than

Conquerors;" Oct. 31-Nov. 2 for the Senior High Fall Retreat, "The Saints Go Marching;" and Nov. 14-16 for the Confirmation Retreat. The cost for each camp is \$75 per participant and leader. The church registration form can be found at www.clearwaterforest.org/ChurchYouthRetreats.pdf. [\(Return to top\)](#)

7. JOHN McCLURE LEADS TOLLEFSON LECTURES AT BUENA VISTA: Popular music, both Christian and secular, communicates powerful religious messages and feelings. People inside and outside of church are listening and learning. John McClure, professor of homiletics and chair of the graduate department of religion at Vanderbilt Divinity School, will conduct the Robert and Barbara Tollefson lectures at Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, Iowa, Monday, Oct. 27. McClure's lectures are titled "Listen to the Music: Popular Music and Christian Identity" and "Calvin Speaks to Music Row." More information about the lectures can be found at www.bvu.edu/living_at_bvu/student_services/spiritual_life/reformed_theology_lectureship.dot. [\(Return to top\)](#)

8. GATHERING FOR COLLEGE-AGE PEOPLE SET AT FARGO CHURCH: First Presbyterian Church in Fargo will be host to "A Gathering for College-Age People" Sunday, Sept. 7, at 5 p. m. featuring Rodger Nishioka, associate professor of Christian education at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Ga. Nishioka will share the results of his recent research project among young adults and the ways some are boldly but humbly claiming Christ in the 21st century. The theme of the event is "Faith in a Fast Food World." This information came from the Aug. 26 edition of ENews of the Northern Plains Presbytery. [\(Return to top\)](#)

9. THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION EMPHASIS SUNDAY IS SEPT. 14: Where would we be without our seminaries? Paul asked the Corinthian Church, "If all were a single member, where would the body be?" (1 Corinthians 12: 19) Where would the body be if we were only an ear or only a mouth or only an eye? Where would the body be if we were congregations without seminaries or seminaries without congregations? The body and its members are interrelated. Theological Education Emphasis Sunday is an invitation to congregations to pray for and celebrate seminaries. The Synod of Lakes and Prairies is host to the only Presbyterian university with a Presbyterian seminary: the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary located in Dubuque, Iowa. Worship materials for Theological Education Emphasis Sunday can be found at www.pcusa.org/seminaries/liturgy.htm and www.pcusa.org/seminaries/getinvolved.htm#worship. [\(Return to top\)](#)

10. APCU EXEC SITES RECOGNITION OF PRESBYTERIAN SCHOOLS: Gary Luhr,

executive direction of the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities, wrote in his September Update, "Besides football there are two sure signs that a new college year has begun. One is the annual college rankings produced by U.S. News & World Report and others. We caution people on our Web site, www.presbyteriancolleges.org, not to be too influenced by rankings. But like the colleges themselves we use rankings to make the point that we have a fine collection of schools. Out of 64 Presbyterian-related colleges and universities, 40 are ranked in the top tier by U.S. News & World Report in its latest compilation. Of those, 17 are earmarked as 'Best Values.'" [\(Return to top\)](#)

11. JAMESTOWN COLLEGE RECOGNIZED IN U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT: In rankings released Aug. 22, the U.S. News & World Report edition of "Best Colleges 2009" includes Jamestown College as one of the top tier baccalaureate colleges in the Midwest region. Jamestown College is again the only North Dakota college or university to achieve top-tier status in their rankings. The announcement comes just as new students arrive on campus and two new additions to the campus, the Student Media Center and Foss Wellness Center, are set to open. This complete story can be found at www.jc.edu/campus/campusClips.php#538. [\(Return to top\)](#)

12. BOARD OF PENSIONS EXPANDS E-LEARNING: Led by its popular financial and retirement planning seminars, education is thriving at the Board of Pensions. As part of the growth, the Board of Pensions is expanding e-learning opportunities with two new presentation modules on community nature and effective salary. These e-learning modules and future webinars will enable the wider Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to understand many facets of the Benefits Plan, as well as provide follow-up learning options to our seminar participants. The first module, Community Nature: Caring for One Another, explores the history and significance of the Benefits Plan's community nature. It can be found at https://admin.na3.acrobat.com/_a701962636/communitynature. A second module defines effective salary, explains how it is calculated and demonstrates the impact of underreporting. This module is https://admin.na3.acrobat.com/_a701962636/effectivesalary. Additional e-learning opportunities can be found at <http://www.pensions.org/portal/server.pt?open=514&objID=17683&mode=2> . [\(Return to top\)](#)

13. IMPERATIVE TO LOVE ENEMIES TAKES ON NEW MEANING: The Rev. Mark Labberton says he learned an indelible lesson in loving one's enemies from a feisty 85-year-old church member who was carjacked by a heroin addict in Berkeley, Calif. "When Doris was hijacked outside the church that Sunday morning," Labberton, pastor of Berkeley's First Presbyterian Church, told 1,000 participants attending the Presbyterian Global Fellowship's third annual gathering in Long Beach, Calif., Aug. 14-16, "she realized that Danny [her captor] had a lot more problems than she did. She understood that to be missional is to love all people, especially those who don't love us." This complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08595. [\(Return to top\)](#)

14. ANNUAL PEACEMAKING COLLOQUIUM SET SEPT. 15-17: Ministers, lay leaders and others will gather next month for a conference exploring how gospel values can transform society's acceptance of gun violence and lead to building a culture of peace. The 2008 Peacemaking Colloquium "Gun Violence and Gospel Values" will take place Sept. 15-17 at Stony Point Center in New York. The conference brochure can be found at www.stonypointcenter.org/filemgmt_data/files/2008_Peacemaking_Brochure-Final.pdf. [\(Return to top\)](#)

15. AMERICANS QUESTION RELIGION'S ROLE IN POLITICS: Some Americans are

having a change of heart about mixing religion and politics. A new national survey finds a narrow majority of the public saying that churches and other houses of worship should keep out of political matters and not express their views on day-to-day social and political matters. The latest survey by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life and the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted from July 31-Aug. 10 among 2,905 adults, reveals that most of the reconsideration of the desirability of religious involvement in politics has occurred among conservatives. Four years ago, just 30% of conservatives believed that churches and other houses of worship should stay out of politics. Today, 50% of conservatives express this view. The survey is available online at <http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=334>. ([Return to top](#))



16. ALBAN INSTITUTE CALLS ATTENTION TO TRANSITION INTO MINISTRY:

For years religious leaders have debated the strategies for effectively preparing seminary students for ministry. A new report from the Alban Institute in Washington, D.C., calls attention to a promising set of recent experiments conducted by the Fund for Theological Education's Transition into Ministry Program. Began in 1999 through funding from Lilly Foundation Inc., the TiM initiative seeks to reshape the preparation of pastors for the challenges of 21st century ministry by supplementing the seminary training received in a M.Div. program with a focused apprenticeship in a "community of practice." Additional information, including resources that support new pastors, can be found at www.transitionintoministry.org. ([Return to top](#))

17. BELOIT COLLEGE PRODUCES 'MINDSET LIST:' The annual Beloit College "Mindset List, a list created 11 years ago to help faculty and others avoid what the creators call "hardening of the references," provides some insight into the class of 2012. The list notes that for students entering colleges and universities this fall: GPS satellite navigation systems have always been available; Coke and Pepsi have always used recycled plastic bottles; electronic filing of tax returns has always been an option; The Tonight Show has always been hosted by Jay Leno; IBM has never made typewriters; and more. The full list can be found at www.beloit.edu/mindset/2012. This brief was provided by Gary Luhr, executive director of the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities, writing in APCU's September Update. ([Return to top](#))