



Synod of Lakes and Prairies
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Keeping in Touch

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

JANUARY 30, 2009

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

News around the synod

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- 3. Collier posts blog, online resources for church growth**
- 4. Omaha Seminary Foundation plans school for pastors**

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- 5. Dubuque Seminary plans discernment conference**
- 6. APCU lists financial aid deadlines**
- 7. McCormick accepts apps doctorate**

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- 8. PDA plans family, youth, father-son volunteer weeks**

Board of Pensions

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News around the PC(USA)

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1. SYNOD ELECTS MODERATOR, POSTS SUMMARY

ONLINE: The Synod of Lakes and Prairies elected and installed Elder Cheryl Biller of Northern Plains Presbytery as moderator for 2009 during its winter meeting Jan 18-20. The synod also elected and installed the Rev. Bob Bouton, East Iowa Presbytery, as vice moderator. In other action, the synod voted to create a task force to study the future and changing role of the synod. A summary of the synod's meeting can be found at

www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/SYNSUMMARY-WINTER09.pdf. ([Return to top](#))

2. WINNEBAGO PARTNERS IN SUPPORT OF

THERAPEUTIC RIDING: Partnering with the First Presbyterian Church, Shawano, Wis., Winnebago Presbytery provides a local mission grant to Red River Riders of Shawano, a non-profit organization that works to improve the development of individuals with disabilities through horseback riding. According to the Red River Riders Web site (www.redriverriders.com), the organization began operation in 1985 with three riders and one horse. It notes, "In 1996 we grew to 35 riders and eight horses. We have served riders with hearing impairment, autism, cerebral palsy and cognitive disabilities, as well as many other disabilities." In addition to gaining improved physical skills through riding, the site notes, "Riding not only exercises the body, but also exercises mind. ... Our riders gain self-esteem, improved attention spans and the ability to follow directions." According to News & Notes, a newsletter of the Winnebago Presbytery, the presbytery support allows Red River Riders "to expand their services to reach more persons as well as keep their program operational via upkeep and making their place more accessible."

(*Information from News & Notes of the Winnebago Presbytery*) ([Return to top](#))

3. COLLIER POSTS BLOG, ONLINE RESOURCES FOR

CHURCH GROWTH: The Rev. Sue Collier, executive presbyter in the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys, identified online resources for church growth and renewal in a column in the Valley Bridge, the monthly newsletter of the presbytery. Collier, who writes at

<http://transformingfollowers.blogspot.com>, described the blog as one "for anyone interested in a conversation to help renew congregations. I'll post thoughts and resources and the occasional workshop [or] conference opportunities that I think might be of interest, and I welcome your comments as we talk together about how each of us, individually and together, can help our congregations renew, transform, grow and thrive." She also identified three other sites: <http://deepandwide.ning.com>, "a place for conversations growing out of the denomination's efforts to help the church grow;" <http://www.presbygrow.net>, a Web site "focused on sharing resources and stories about church transformation ... ;" and <http://www.mod.reyes-chow.com>, the Web site of General Assembly Moderator Bruce Reyes-Chow, who Collier describes as the "most accessible moderator we have ever had." ([Return to top](#))

4. OMAHA SEMINARY FOUNDATION SLATES SCHOOL

FOR PASTORS: Presbyterian clergy who serve the church in some capacity and Commissioned Lay Pastors serving a church within a 13-state region, including all the states of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, are being invited to apply

- conference
in Kansas City
- [12.](#) Communicators national conference set in 'big tent'
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- [16.](#) Presbyterian Historical Society plans history seminar
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- [20.](#) ACSWP ponders impact of Obama's presidency

Just one more

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to the Omaha School for Pastors July 8-15 at Hastings (Neb.) College. The program is sponsored by the Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation. Priority is given to those who have not previously attended. The application deadline is March 16. Details about the program can be found at www.omaha-sem-found.org/education_pastorsschool.html. ([Return to top](#))



5. DUBUQUE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY PLANS

DISCERNMENT CONFERENCE: Twice a year the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary offers its "Exploring a Call to Ministry Conference" for prospective students. The next conference date is March 18-20. The conference opens with dinner Wednesday and ends with lunch Friday. For \$25, the seminary provides two nights' lodging and all meals. Participants have the opportunity to be in a discernment group setting while on campus to worship, attend class, talk one-on-one with a professor, and meet students and their spouses. Additional information about the conference and registration materials can be found at <http://udts.dbq.edu/ExploreCall.cfm>. The seminary is also accepting applications for its Doctor of Ministry degree. The 2009 emphasis will be missional spirituality, with three cohort leaders: the Revs. Beth McCaw, Timothy Slemmons and Tammy Wiens. The application deadline for the program is Feb. 15. Program residency is May 17-29. Additional information about the program can be found at <http://udts.dbq.edu>. ([Return to top](#))

6. APCU LISTS DEADLINES FOR COLLEGE FINANCIAL

AID: The most recent newsletter from the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities contained a number of deadlines for college financial aid available through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Upcoming deadlines include April 1 for the Samuel Robinson Award for currently enrolled juniors and seniors at a Presbyterian college or university, June 15 for a Student Opportunity Scholarship for junior and senior Presbyterian students in select majors at accredited institutions in the United States, and June 15 for Native American Education Grant for Native American students attending an accredited institution in the United States. More information can be found at www.pcusa.org/financialaid. ([Return to top](#))

7. MCCORMICK ACCEPTS APPS FOR MINISTRY DOCTORATE: McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Ill., is accepting applications from individuals who want to begin study for a ministry doctorate either in June or November 2009. Doctoral program applications are reviewed by the admissions committee on a continuing basis. Prospective students are encouraged to submit their applications well in advance of the final deadlines - April 1 for June entry and Sept. 1 for November entry. More information about the program can be found at

www.mccormick.edu/content/view/556/625. ([Return to top](#))



8. PDA PLANS FAMILY, YOUTH, FATHER-SON VOLUNTEER WEEKS:

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has planned multiple weeks of disaster recovery in the Gulf Coast to cover all family angles with a theme of "Rebuilding in the Gulf Coast." Family Week, slated to run June 14-20, is open to nearly any combination of family members with a minimum age of 14. Father-Son Week, also with a minimum age of 14, runs June 21-27. Youth Weeks, open to youth age 16 and older, run three consecutive weeks beginning June 28. Details can be found at

<http://www.pcusa.org/pda/response/usa/gulfcoast/index-gulfcoast.htm>. ([Return to top](#))

9. BOARD OF PENSIONS WAIVES COPAY FOR PREVENTIVE CARE: The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is offering all active medical plan members and their covered spouses and dependents an office copay waiver for annual covered preventive care services with an in-network primary physician or gynecologist. Details can be found at www.pensions.org/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=213&&PageID=284&mode=2&in_hi_userid=2&cached=true. Eligible in-network preventive tests and screening services will continue to be covered at 100 percent. The coverage of these well visits is designed to encourage members to engage in the habit of proactive action with regard to their physical well-being. ([Return to top](#))

10. PENSIONS BOARD OFFERS NEW FITNESS BENEFIT: The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has added a fitness benefit for active and retired members and their covered spouses and dependent children - www.pensions.org/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=218&&PageID=71064&mode=2&in_hi_userid=2&cached=true. The program offers three membership options and reduced rates on fitness club memberships. The gym network includes more than 10,000 exercise facilities. ([Return to top](#))

11. PRESBYTERIAN STEWARDSHIP CONFERENCE SET IN KANSAS CITY: The Presbyterian Stewardship Conference, "Stewardship Kaleidoscope," is slated March 9-11 at the Hilton Hotel, Kansas City International Airport. The brochure can be found at www.heartlandpby.org/kaleidoscope/StewardshipKaleidoscopeBrochureElectronic.pdf. Information is also available from the Presbyterian Endowment Education Resource (PEER) Network website at www.peernetwork.org. ([Return to top](#))



12. COMMUNICATORS NATIONAL CONFERENCE SLATED AT 'BIG TENT': This summer the Presbyterian Communicators Network national conference will be held in conjunction with the "Big Tent" event of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) June 11-13 in Atlanta, Ga.

In addition to the Communicators Network, conferences slated at the "Big Tent" include New Immigrant Ministries Convocation, National Multicultural Church Conference, the National Elders Conference, the Racial Ethnic Convocation, the Stewardship Conference, the Peacemaking Conference, the Evangelism and Church Growth Conference, the PHEWA Social Justice Biennial Conference, and the Committee of Preparation for Ministry/Committee on Ministry/Seminary Healthy Ministry Conference. The "Big Tent" even has its own spot online at www.pcusa.org/bigtent. ([Return to top](#))

13. COMMUNICATORS NEWSLETTER ADDRESSES WEB-BASED TOOLS: The Presbyterian Communicators Network recently addressed Web-based tools in its newsletter. The newsletter asked, "How can your congregation stay connected when the church doors are closed?" It went on to note that church leaders and congregations are joining online communities to stay in touch around the clock. It stated, "Web-based tools like Twitter (www.twitter.com) help you keep your finger on the pulse of your community, as users answer one question - what are you doing? "Twitterers" send status updates in 140 characters or less. ... Twitter is just the tip of the social networking iceberg. Facebook (www.facebook.com) serves as a meeting place for Presbyterians around the world. You can form a group around any topic and share ideas with your friend in the next pew or in the next time zone. If you prefer to limit your audience, private networks like Ning (www.ning.com) offer the capabilities of Facebook without the onlookers. Key to these online communities is the idea that participants no longer have to be in the same time or space to have a conversation." The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) can be found on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Presbyterian and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/pages/Presbyterian-Church-USA/22627435207. ([Return to top](#))



14. 'GIFTS OF WOMEN' TO BE FETED MARCH 8: "Celebrate the Gifts of Women Sunday," planned March 8, honors women who contribute their gifts to the church and community and lifts up issues of women's rights. The day is also International Women's Day. This year's celebration also coincides with the 500th birthday of John Calvin. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is offering multiple resources, including pieces for worship services. More details can be found at www.pcusa.org/womensministries/resources. (*Illustration courtesy of Ruggieri/Illustration Works.*) ([Return to top](#))



15. PC(USA) OFFERS 'MISSION CENTERED' EXPERIENCE: Junior and senior high groups that are looking for a mission trip this summer are being invited by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to check out "Mission Centered," an intentionally Presbyterian mission experience in Louisville, Ky. Participants will live in community with and work alongside other Presbyterian youth and youth leaders from around the country, work at mission sites supported by Presbyterian congregations of Louisville, and spend time at the Presbyterian Center, the national headquarters of the denomination. More information can be found at www.pcusa.org/youthministry/missioncentered. ([Return to top](#))

16. PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY PLANS HISTORY SEMINAR: The Presbyterian Historical Society will conduct its annual Local Church History Seminar April 30 through May 3 at William Black Lodge at Montreat, N.C. The event is designed for persons interested in the management and preservation of records and writing congregation history. The seminar features workshops on Presbyterian history, oral history, researching and writing a church history, managing and preserving congregation records, disaster planning, exhibits, and anniversary celebrations. Additional information can be found at www.history.pcusa.org/cong/lchs/workshops.html. ([Return to top](#))

17. PRESBYTERIAN WRITERS GUILD PLANS CONFERENCE IN APRIL: New York Times bestselling author and international speaker Cecil "Cec" Murphey has partnered with The Presbyterian Writers Guild to sponsor a Presbyterian Writers Conference April 23-24 at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Ga. The conference will provide attendees the opportunity to hear and speak with Murphey, a literary agent and the keynote speaker. Murphey is author and co-author of more than 100 books, including the bestseller "90 Minutes in Heaven." Murphey's Web site is www.themanbehindthewords.com. The conference will address the needs and opportunities in Presbyterian publications. The conference fee is \$200. Presbyterian Writers Guild members will receive a 10 percent discount. Additional information about the conference can be found at http://www.ctsnet.edu/Files/Events/Final_flyer_McCutchan.pdf. ([Return to top](#))

18. PRESBYTERIAN MEN SCHEDULE NATIONAL CONFERENCE: The annual conference of Presbyterian Men (www.pcusa.org/men) is all set for April 17-19 in Denver. The conference, "Challenges Facing Men in the 21st Century," will include worship, workshops, fellowship and a number of keynote speakers. Speakers include the Rev Jerry Cannon, pastor of C.N. Jenkins Memorial Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, N.C., and the Rev. William Calhoun, pastor of Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church in Denver. The completed story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/09056. ([Return to top](#))

19. ACSWP SEEKS VOICE IN ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION: In 1944, global economic leaders gathered at Bretton Woods to plan the massive economic recovery that would be necessary after the destruction of World War II. Out of that meeting came such financial institutions as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Today, with the world economy in the grips of the worst financial meltdown since the Great Depression, world leaders are again beginning to talk about plans for the next recovery. Many have come to embrace the necessity for another major gathering, coined by some as "Bretton Woods II." The complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/09051. ([Return to top](#))

20. ACSWP PONDERES IMPACT OF OBAMA'S PRESIDENCY: With the new administration of Barack Obama seeking more counsel from mainline denominations than its predecessor, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (www.pcusa.org/acswp) approached its lengthy agenda with renewed vigor in Berkeley, Calif., Jan. 22-25. On issues ranging from human rights to immigration to the Iraq war, the committee seemed convinced that the PC(USA)'s voice will be now be heard more clearly in Washington than at any time in recent memory. The complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/09060.htm. ([Return to top](#))

21. GEEZ MAGAZINE LAUNCHES AWKWARD SERMON CONTEST: Geez magazine, published in Winnipeg, Manitoba, is bringing the stodgy old pulpit back from the brink of cultural oblivion with a sermon contest of holy mischief. Building on last year's "30 Sermons You'd Never Hear in Church Contest," Geez magazine's 2009 "Daringly Awkward Sermon Contest" is ushering in a new and - make no mistake - decidedly different era of proclamation. "The world needs bold voices of spiritual depth," says Geez publisher Aiden Enns. "But maybe the message can have an element of holy mischief, a smirk instead of a furrowed brow, and, at the same time, more connection to the pressing issues of the day." The contest invites entries that explore the aspects of social change that make us squirm, things like privilege, right-wing relatives, the drunk stranger in the back pew, guilt feelings, or litter in the poor part of town. The top three sermons will receive \$400 each. Full details and entry form are available at www.geezmagazine.org. ([Return to top](#))