



**JULY 18, 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).

### Disaster responses

1. **NO. 1 QUESTION IS, 'HOW CAN I HELP?'**
2. **CENTRAL NEBRASKA SURPASSES 100 BUCKETS, TRIP LEADER SOUGHT**
3. **WISCONSIN LAUNCHES VOLUNTEER INITIATIVE**
4. **HILLCREST PITCHES IN WITH HELP FROM UNITED WAY**

### General Assembly updates

5. **MODERATOR IS FREQUENT BLOGGER, MORE GA COMMENTS ONLINE**
6. **CONSTITUTIONAL SERVICES ISSUES DOCS RELATED TO GA**
7. **PARSONS ISSUES LETTER TO PRESBYTERIES, SYNODS**
8. **PC(USA) LEADERS SEND FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO CHURCH**

### Upcoming events

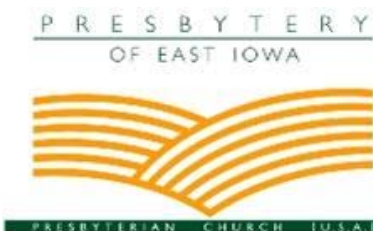
9. **SYNOD SCHOOL TIME RAPIDLY APPROACHES**
10. **RE:IMAGE CONFERENCE SET IN IOWA IN AUGUST**
11. **'MINDFUL LIVING' CONFERENCE SET IN OCTOBER IN ALEXANDRIA**

### Other news across the synod

12. **TWIN CITIES AREA WELCOMES KENYAN CHURCH INTO PRESBYTERY**
13. **CARROLL COLLEGE NOW CARROLL UNIVERSITY**

### And a few more

14. **CHURCH UNBOUND: UNBINDING THE CHAINS**
15. **WCC ACCEPTS APPS FOR 2009 INTERNSHIPS**
16. **PATRIOTIC HOLIDAYS POSE DILEMMA FOR WORSHIP**



**1. NO. 1 QUESTION IS, 'HOW CAN I HELP?'** The East Iowa Presbytery Web site on July 16 opened with the question the presbytery is most often asked, "How can I help." The site noted, "We need day volunteers to help clean out homes but please give us a week's notice to plug you into one of the work sites since we are now coordinating with out of state volunteer teams to work on homes in need of repair." Individuals, congregations or presbyteries are being asked to contact the presbytery office at 319.354.9220 and ask for Richard Tiegs. He can also be reached by email at [rtiegs@peia.org](mailto:rtiegs@peia.org). A full update on flood recovery efforts east Iowa can be found on the presbytery Web site at [www.peia.org](http://www.peia.org).

**2. CENTRAL NEBRASKA SURPASSES 100 BUCKETS, TRIP LEADER SOUGHT:** The updates regarding clean-up buckets provided some surprises through the Presbytery of Central Nebraska's electronic news – PCNnews – last week. And the dialogue showed the nature of Presbyterians rallying to help their neighbors. Last month Bob Houser, executive presbyter, issued a challenge to each congregation in the presbytery to contribute two clean-up buckets for flood relief – a total of 82 buckets for the 41 congregations in the presbytery. Last week Tuesday, July 8, Angie Palmer, the presbytery's office manager, noted that the presbytery had "collected enough money for

57 buckets plus three buckets that have been assembled." The following morning she noted, "I have some exciting news to share! We reached our goal of 82 buckets. Thanks to 15 of our 41 churches and some individual sponsors. What is even more exciting is that we currently have enough money for 89 buckets. I don't want us to stop now. I think it would be even more exciting if we could send our neighbors 100 buckets." And the next day she wrote, "This just keeps getting more and more exciting for our Presbytery. We now have a total of 99 buckets." From tracking updates from others within the presbytery, the 100-bucket goal has been passed. Houser then wrote, "Now that we have been collecting buckets and money for buckets to go to Iowa I have had several requests about whether the presbytery is planning a work trip to Iowa. I would very much hope that we could get such a trip organized quickly. What we need first is someone willing to plan and lead such a trip. Please let me know in the presbytery office if you are either interested in leading the trip or going on the trip."

**3. WISCONSIN LAUNCHES VOLUNTEER INITIATIVE:** Following record-breaking rainfall and flooding this summer, the state Citizen Corps Council and Wisconsin Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) have launched an initiative to encourage and prepare Wisconsin citizens to volunteer during emergencies and disasters. The partnership will also work with local governments to better use and incorporate volunteers in disaster response and recovery plans. "As the response to recent floods showed, in Wisconsin, when people are in need, our citizens come to their aid," said Governor Jim Doyle. "This initiative will help citizens safely and efficiently join our professional first responders in responding to emergencies, saving lives and protecting communities from disaster." The complete story can be found at <http://www.jknox.org/flood/WIStateVolunteer.pdf>. Updates on flood recovery in the Presbytery of John Knox can be found at [www.jknox.org](http://www.jknox.org).



**4. HILLCREST PITCHES IN WITH HELP FROM UNITED WAY:** In the wake of what some are calling Iowa's greatest catastrophe, the floods of 2008, Hillcrest Family Services, Dubuque, Iowa, with assistance from United Way, is committed to assisting wherever possible, according to its president and chief executive officer. "Hillcrest has a long tradition of standing with the people of Iowa in crisis. This event will be no different, with the exception perhaps being the size of the devastation and depth of the need so many will face," said Gary Gansemer, Hillcrest president. Hillcrest has teamed up with its church partners across Iowa to provide clean-up teams consisting of Hillcrest staff and kids from its residential homes. These teams are doing cleanup work in Cedar Rapids or Iowa City on Wednesdays from June 25 through Aug. 20. The Dubuque Area United Way provides assistance with transportation costs. More information about Hillcrest Family Services can be found at [www.hillcrest-fs.org](http://www.hillcrest-fs.org).



**5. MODERATOR IS FREQUENT BLOGGER, MORE GA COMMENTS ONLINE:** The Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow, moderator of the 218th General Assembly, is a regular and frequent blogger, and his blog is a great place to gather personal insight into the 39-year-old church leader. His blog can be found at [www.mod.reyes-chow.com](http://www.mod.reyes-chow.com). Not all synod comments concerning the General Assembly made it into the last issue of Keeping in Touch. The newsletter missed the blog of Sue Coller, executive presbyter from Minnesota Valleys. Her comments concerning the General Assembly can be found at <http://minnesotavalleysspby.blogspot.com/>. Comments from several of those who attended the General Assembly from North Central Iowa can be found in that presbytery's newsletter at <http://presbynciowa.org/stuff/Weekly%20E-news%207-10-08.pdf>.

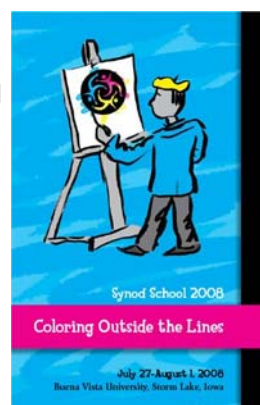
**6. CONSTITUTIONAL SERVICES ISSUES DOCS RELATED TO GA:** Doska Ross, assistant stated clerk and manager of polity guidance and training in the Office of Constitutional Services, Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), issued two documents last week to all middle governing bodies related to actions of the 218th General Assembly. Ross wrote, "We have just completed two documents that we hope will be helpful to you." The documents, "Advisory Opinion #22" and "Constitutional Musing #14," are available at <http://www.pcusa.org/constitutionalservices/advisory-opinion.htm> and <http://www.pcusa.org/constitutionalservices/musings.htm>. Ross wrote,

"Advisory Opinion #22 is a brief summary of some of the actions taken by the 218th General Assembly in San Jose. These actions have raised many questions about what the effects will be. We encourage you to share this Advisory Opinion with the sessions and members of your presbytery." She added, "Constitutional Musing #14 deals with the evaluations of the Stated Clerk and the Executive/General Presbyter. This document has nothing to do with Advisory Opinion #22. We hope you may find this Musing helpful to share with your personnel committee, council, and other related bodies."

**7. PARSONS ISSUES LETTER TO PRESBYTERIES, SYNODS:** Gradye Parsons, newly elected stated clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) issued a letter last week to the presbyteries and synods of the denomination. His letter stated, "One of the many business items approved by the recent 218th General Assembly (2008) was a commissioner's resolution (item 04-28), 'On Urging a Gracious, Pastoral Response to Churches Requesting Dismissal from the PC(USA).'" The final text of the resolution can be found at <http://www.pc-biz.org/IOBView.aspx?m=ro&id=2137>. He noted, "The thrust of this action is for presbyteries and synods to develop policies that clarify their process for the dismissal of congregations and ministers to other denominations." He pointed out that examples of this policy can be found at [www.pcusa.org/mgbconnect/gov.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/mgbconnect/gov.htm). He went on to note, "No doubt, all conversations about dismissal are tough and painful, but as many of you know, they can also be Christ-like. I know that has been the goal in a majority of cases, but fear has sometimes changed the discourse. Hopefully, this recent action of the assembly can help us avoid future civil cases by having established clear policies." He also noted that it would be "helpful to refer to the Advisory Opinions that are posted online (<http://www.pcusa.org/constitutionalservices/advisory-opinion.htm>), especially #19 ('Implementing the Trust Clause for the Unity of the Church') and #22 ('Actions of the 218th General Assembly related to G-6.0106b and G-6.0108'); as well as Constitutional Musings (<http://www.pcusa.org/constitutionalservices/musings.htm>), especially #12 ('Responding Pastorally to Troubled Churches')."

**8. PC(USA) LEADERS SEND FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO CHURCH:** The three top leaders of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have sent a follow-up letter to the one they issued immediately after the recent 218th General Assembly, asking Presbyterians "to continue to celebrate with us good news of our General Assembly and of our Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)." The letter — from General Assembly Moderator Bruce Reyes-Chow, General Assembly Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons and General Assembly Council Executive Director Linda Bryant Valentine — highlights actions of the San Jose General Assembly that may have been overlooked in partisan rhetoric that followed the Assembly. This story and the complete letter can be found at [www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08508](http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08508).

**9. SYNOD SCHOOL TIME RAPIDLY APPROACHES:** "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. Synod School runs July 28 through Aug. 1 at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa. The Rev. Scott Nesbitt, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Clinton, Iowa, and convocation speaker at Synod School, will challenge attendees 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-long event has been described as "a special learning and personal enrichment experience for all ages." The Synod School catalog and registration forms are posted online at [www.lakesandprairies.org/school.html](http://www.lakesandprairies.org/school.html).



**10. 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).

**11. 'MINDFUL LIVING' CONFERENCE SET IN OCTOBER IN ALEXANDRIA:** An ecumenical gathering of denominational staff, clergy, seminarians, lay leaders, church educators, eco-justice coordinators and other Christians will gather in Alexandria, Minn., Oct. 9-11 for the National Council of Churches of Christ "Healthy People, Healthy

Churches, Healthy Planet" conference. The conference, including workshops and worship, will provide education concerning toxins found in everyday items in homes, churches, and human bodies. More information about the conference can be found at <http://www.nccecojustice.org/mnconf.htm>.

**12. TWIN CITIES AREA WELCOMES KENYAN CHURCH INTO PRESBYTERY:** At its July 8 meeting at Buffalo (Minn.) Presbyterian Church, the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area welcomed the Kenyan Christian Outreach Fellowship into the PTCA — the presbytery's first immigrant fellowship. The church is led by Rev. Michael Nguru Kamau, whose membership was transferred from the Presbytery of Nairobi, of the Presbyterian Church in East Africa to Twin Cities Area. The congregation, which worships on Sunday afternoons, says in its mission statement: "We focus on actively bearing witness to the gospel, building and nurturing relationships through our love, prayer, support and acceptance of one another."

**13. CARROLL COLLEGE NOW CARROLL UNIVERSITY:** After 162 years, Carroll College, online at [www.cc.edu](http://www.cc.edu), has changed its name to Carroll University. The change took effect July 1. The school's board of trustees made the decision May 12, after months of discussion. During the process, more than 26,000 people associated with the school were asked their opinion. "We are changing our name, quite simply, to reflect truth in advertising," said William G. Laatsch, a 1960 Carroll graduate and chairman of the Carroll board of trustees. "Based on our wide array of academic programs, we are already classified as a university by national organizations. We also believe the name Carroll University will help us recruit non-traditional, graduate, distance-learning and international students." The institution that became Carroll College was started in 1839 as Prairieville Academy and incorporated as Carroll College in 1846.

**14. CHURCH UNBOUND: UNBINDING THE CHAINS:** Covering the Church Unbound Conference in Montreat, N.C., Jack Haberer, editor of The Presbyterian Outlook, wrote, "An unbound church must come to terms with its own chains. So said Christine Yoder, as she launched the first full day of [the conference.] Co-sponsored by the Cross-Cultural Alliance of Ministries, the Montreat Conference Center, and the Presbyterian Outlook Foundation, the five-day event, which concluded July 5, invited participants from 33 states to ask, "What is the church you're dreaming of?" On the encouragement of co-convenor, Louise Johnson, the conferees also were encouraged to ask themselves, "What is standing in the way? What are you going to do about it? and ... Who else can you dream with?" This story can be found at [www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08494](http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08494).

**15. WCC ACCEPTS APPS FOR 2009 INTERNSHIPS:** The World Council of Churches is seeking five young people ages 18-30 to serve as interns in the ecumenical organization's Geneva headquarters from February 2009-January 2010. Deadline for applications is Sept. 15. Each intern will be assigned to one of the WCC's working areas — accompanying churches in situations of conflict; youth and ecumenical relationships; visitors program and media relations; faith, science, technology and ethics; and the WCC Commission on Faith and Order. Interns will carry out their tasks in cooperation with program staff and under individualized supervision. This complete story can be found at [www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08515](http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08515).

**16. PATRIOTIC HOLIDAYS POSE DILEMMA FOR WORSHIP:** Early July is a time of examining the dichotomy or connection of patriotism and worship, and church magazines and newsletters have included a variety of stories and opinions concerning a place for recognizing nations in worship. Mark Achtemeier, associate professor of theology and ethics at University of Dubuque (Iowa) Theological Seminary, opened a sermon at First Church in Dubuque, Iowa, like this: "Patriotic holidays like the Fourth of July often pose a dilemma for pastors and worship committees as they think about what kind of recognition to include in our worship. Independence Day is an official holiday of the United States of America and not of the Christian church. Our faith is founded on the confession that Jesus is Lord — Christ is the one we serve in this place, rather than the president or the U.S. government. In fact this congregation has roots in many other nations around the world. Over the years our family has been attending, we have welcomed into this fellowship brothers and sisters from Canada, the Philippines, Great Britain, Ghana, Mexico, Korea, and a host of other places. Christ's kingdom, of which our church is a part, is more encompassing than any set of national boundaries ... " The complete sermon can be found in the July 7 issue of The Presbyterian Outlook or online at <http://www.pres-outlook.org/reports-a-resources/presbyterian-heritage-articles/2-presbyterian-heritage-articles/7675-church-and-state.html>.