

**IN THIS ISSUE: General Assembly reports, flood responses and more**



**JULY 4, 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).

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1. **GENERAL ASSEMBLY HAS MANY INTERPRETATIONS:** "With e-mail boxes, Web sites and the blogosphere filling up with varying interpretations of the just-concluded 218th General Assembly, the three top leaders of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have sent



a letter to all 11,000 of the denomination's congregations acknowledging the anxiety the Assembly has created for some, but asking Presbyterians to become accurately informed and to stay together." That first sentence is the way the Presbyterian News Service

introduced a letter to congregations from General Assembly Moderator Bruce Reyes-Chow, General Assembly Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons and General Assembly Council Executive Director Linda Valentine. The full text of the letter can be found at [www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08469](http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08469). Other PC(USA) Web site spots with GA information are [www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org) or [www.pcusa.org/pcnews](http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews) or [www.pcusa.org/ga218](http://www.pcusa.org/ga218) .

**2. SOME PRESBYTERIES BLOG, POST GA INFO ONLINE:** The Presbytery of Des Moines had an active blog during the General Assembly. Elder Nancy Lister-Settle of First Presbyterian in Dallas Center and the Rev. Dave Endriss of Trinity United Presbyterian in Indianola blogged daily and submitted timely photographs, according to Kim Coulter, director of communication for the presbytery. The presbytery's blog can be found at <http://presbyteryofdesmoines.blogspot.com/>. The Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow, newly elected moderator of the General Assembly, has responded to the blog entry, "General Assembly - Last Day." There's also a unique photograph at the blog - one of the Des Moines delegation with Reyes-Chow. Des Moines General Presbyter Phil Barrett filled the role of official guide for Reyes-Chow, accompanying the moderator to events and appearances, insuring the new moderator was able to keep a busy schedule. And speaking of photographs, there's a photograph of the delegation from the Presbytery of Twin Cities Area on that presbytery's blog at [http://ptcaweb.typepad.com/emerge\\_the\\_blog/2008/06/ptca-commission.html](http://ptcaweb.typepad.com/emerge_the_blog/2008/06/ptca-commission.html).

At least one Youth Advisory Delegate blogged from the General Assembly. Chad Schwickerath of Ankeny, Iowa, blogged at <http://chad-the-yad.blogspot.com/>. The Rev. Sarah Moore-Nokes, associate executive presbyter of the Winnebago Presbytery, also blogged from the General Assembly. Her messages can be found at [www.winnebago-presbytery.org](http://www.winnebago-presbytery.org). The Rev. Tom Launius, pastor of Southminster Presbyterian Church, Waukesha, Wis., and representing the Milwaukee Presbytery, offers his personal reflections on the General Assembly at [www.pbymilwaukee.org/stories.iml?ID=82](http://www.pbymilwaukee.org/stories.iml?ID=82).

And the Rev. J. Keith Cook noted in Monday Morning in the Presbytery, the newsletter of the Missouri River Valley Presbytery, that his son, Andy, blogged from the General Assembly at [http://pcmwindow.org/index.php?option=com\\_myblog&category=General+Assembly&Itemid=52](http://pcmwindow.org/index.php?option=com_myblog&category=General+Assembly&Itemid=52)



**3. PDA LISTS POSSIBLE RESPONSES TO IOWA, WISCONSIN FLOODS:**

Presbyterian

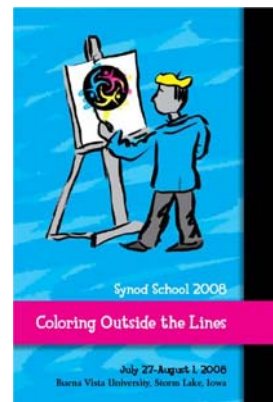
Disaster Assistance has received a list of specific large items needed to respond to the floods in Iowa, and the PDA Call Center is accepting calls from volunteer work teams at 866.732.6121. More about PDA's response to the Iowa and Wisconsin floods can be found at <http://www.pcusa.org/pda/response/usa/2008winterspringstorms-floods-index.htm>.

**4. LOCAL FLOOD RESPONSES ANNOUNCED FOR IOWA, WISCONSIN:** Local responses to storms and floods in Iowa and Wisconsin are available in presbytery offices and on presbytery Web sites. Information has been updated today for the Presbytery of East Iowa at [www.peia.org](http://www.peia.org) and the Presbytery of Des Moines at <http://presbyteryofdesmoines.blogspot.com/>. Flood recovery information regarding efforts in the Presbytery of John Knox can be found at <http://www.jknox.org/flood.htm>. Congregations or presbyteries planning to assist in North Central Iowa, where a tornado devastated Parkersburg, Iowa, and floods ravaged Waterloo-Cedar Falls, are asked to call the presbytery office at 319.233.1747.

**5. RETIRED REPORTER WRITES ABOUT WORK IN PARKERSBURG:** The June 26 issue of the North Central Iowa E-News included an article written by Gil Dietz, a retired reporter. Dietz wrote, "Presbyterians, Lutherans, Catholics, Methodists and people of other denominations have been working side by side in the aftermath of the tornado that ripped through the town of Parkersburg on Sunday, May 25. The word Hope kept reappearing as volunteers were working the week of June 15-21, as they have been for four weeks in response to the F5 twister that destroyed nearly 300 homes, and killed seven people. Hope is a realization and a pledge for the future." The rest of the article can be found at <http://presbynciowa.org/stuff/Weekly%20E-News%206-26-08.pdf>.

**6. CENTRAL NEBRASKA MORE THAN HALF WAY TO BUCKET GOAL:** The last issue of Keeping in Touch included a brief note about a challenge from Bob Houser, executive presbyter in the Central Nebraska Presbytery, to each church in the presbytery to contribute two clean-up buckets for flood relief. On Wednesday this week Angie Palmer, office manager in Central Nebraska, sent out the following note, "I have some exciting news to report! We currently have collected money for 46 buckets and a partial and have collected three buckets that have been put together. This means that we are over half way to our goal of 82. We continue to encourage those churches that have not pledged any buckets to consider accepting the challenge. If you have any questions in regards to the clean up buckets please contact the presbytery office."

**7. SYNOD SCHOOL 2008 IS 'COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES:'** Synod School 2008, which runs July 27 through Aug. 1 at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa, is about "Coloring Outside the Lines," a look at how the church might move beyond timidity and try new things. The Rev. Scott Nesbitt, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Clinton, Iowa, will be this year's convocation speaker. More about Synod School - a week of Presbyterians of all ages having fun - including registration materials can be found at <http://www.lakesandprairies.org/school.html>.



**8. RACIAL ETHNIC COMMITTEE POSTS SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION:** The synod's Committee on Racial Ethnic Ministry has mailed its scholarship application to all presbyteries within the synod and it has posted the application online. The scholarship fund is an educational assistance program designed to encourage racial-ethnic students in their preparation for service in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Applicants must be minority students who live within the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, active member of a PC(USA) congregation, studying to

prepare for leadership in the PC(USA) or in a related social service ecumenical organization, enrolled at least half time and in good academic standing, making progress toward a degree and demonstrate financial need. The scholarship application, with a deadline of Sept. 30, 2008, is available at [www.lakesandprairies.org/resources\\_re\\_scholarship.html](http://www.lakesandprairies.org/resources_re_scholarship.html).

**9. RE:IMAGE SET IN AUGUST IN DES MOINES:** Produced by Iowa Religious Media Services, "RE: image II," a conference described as one that addresses "tools and techniques for tomorrow's churches," is slated Saturday, Aug. 16, at Plymouth Congregation Church in Des Moines, Iowa. The conference includes a full day of training for church and parish leaders and features a keynote address by Rodger Nishioka, associate Professor of Christian education at Columbia Theological Seminary. Nishioka will also present two identical breakout sessions titled "Working with Junior High Kids." Additional details about the conference can be found at [www.irms.org](http://www.irms.org).

**10. 'WOMEN'S CONNECTION 2008' SET AT MONTREAT IN AUGUST:** Katharine Rhodes Henderson, author of "[God's Troublemakers: How Women of Faith are Changing the World,](#)" will be the keynote speaker at Montreat (N.C.) Conference Center's "Women's Connection 2008" scheduled Aug. 3-7. Henderson, executive vice president, Auburn Theological Seminary, is a pastor in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and co-founder of Face to Face/Faith to Faith, a multi-faith leadership program. Beyond some exceptional speakers, other activities include morning Bible devotionals, wellness cooking, armchair massages, a spiritual direction seminar, Presbyterian Women circle study and hiking. Scholarships are available for this event. Event information and registration can be found [www.montreat.org/current/2008-montreat-womens-connection](http://www.montreat.org/current/2008-montreat-womens-connection).

**11. PRESBYTERIANS AMONG GROUPS URGING TORTURE BAN:** The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has joined a bipartisan group of some 200 religious leaders, former top government officials and retired generals in calling on President George W. Bush to sign an executive order outlawing torture and cruel and inhuman treatment of detainees held in connection with the global war on terror. A presidential order to ban torture is essential, they say, to improve national security, recommit to American values and shore up alliances in the war on terror. The rest of this Presbyterian News Service story can be found at [www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08472](http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08472).

**12. FRANCISCAN WRITES FROM PRISON ABOUT TORTURE:** A Franciscan priest penned a lament from jail where he served time for challenging U.S. involvement in torture. The article by Louis Vitale is included in the July issue of Sojourners magazine. It begins, "It was the evening of October 16, 2007, and Stephen Kelly, SJ, and I were due in court the next day for our nonviolent witness against torture nearly a year earlier. That night we received a call from retired Maj. Gen. Antonio Taguba, the man who wrote the U.S. Army's report on the Abu Ghraib prison scandal in Iraq. He told us, 'History will honor your actions.' The next day a magistrate in a Tucson, Ariz., courtroom reached a different conclusion, and sent us to prison for five months." The rest of the article can be found at <http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0807&article=080726>.