

IN THIS ISSUE: Flood responses, synod events, news of schools, pensions.org, small church Sunday, 'Potter' author



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You can find the synod online at www.lakesandprairies.org and on MySpace at www.myspace.com/synodoflakesandprairies.

Editor's Note: Duane Sweep, associate for communications in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, will be out of the office June 20-28, working at the General Assembly in San Jose, Calif. He can be contacted by email -- dsweep@lakesandprairies.org -- or at 612.868.0940.

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1. PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE AT WORK IN IOWA: From its Web site, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance noted, "Through your generous gifts to the One Great Hour of Sharing, PDA has been able to respond to 27 disaster assistance requests in 20 of our presbyteries in the past five months - just like the current flooding - an unprecedented event. \$246,000 of that fund has already been released to these presbyteries. More will be needed as we respond to new requests for recovery and rebuilding assistance as a result of the historic flooding in the Midwest, and other storms that may impact communities in the months ahead." More details about the work of PDA, along with donation information, can be found at www.pcusa.org/pda. For the 2008 U.S. storms, PDA has established a special account - North America Disaster Response & Relief (DR000162). The PDA site notes, "This designated account supplements the One Great Hour of Sharing offering to enable a significant response to communities impacted by the heavily-active 2008 season of tornadoes, storms, and floods in the United States." Online donations can be made at www.pcusa.org/give/online/projectSelectAction.do?numberString=DR000162.

2. EAST IOWA WEB SITE CONTAINS RESPONSE INFORMATION: The Presbytery of East Iowa is developing a new Web site, which can still be found at www.peia.org. On Wednesday morning, June 18, the site notes, "Presbyterian Disaster Assistance will be meeting with our Disaster Response Task Force tomorrow to set in motion our response plan. We will be discussing volunteer coordination and housing along with determining sites in the Cedar Rapids/Iowa City area where we will be setting up work camps. We will post an update tomorrow about the results of that meeting and how you and your church can plug into the relief effort." At the present time, congregations or other organizations interested in sending a work team to help with clean-up should contact Penny Noel at the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Call Center at 866.732.6121 or by emailing pdacallcenter@sbcglobal.net. The presbytery is accepting financial donations at Presbytery of East Iowa, Attn: 2008 Flood Relief, 1700 South 1st Avenue, Suite 23, Iowa City, IA 52240. Contributors should write "2008 Flood Relief" in the memo section of the check.

3. NORTH CENTRAL IOWA CONTINUES WORK IN PARKERSBURG: Kaylene Hoskins, disaster assistance coordinator in the Presbytery of North Central Iowa, continues working in Parkersburg, Iowa, where a tornado tore through that community May 25. Congregations or other groups that are willing to provide work teams in Parkersburg should contact Hoskins through the presbytery office by calling 319.233.1747. She said some rebuilding is beginning to take place in Parkersburg, but she said recovery will be a long-term process. Providing a presence in the community is important, she said, because some tornado victims "just want someone to listen to them." Hoskins said the presbytery is working closely with 15 families in Parkersburg, "walking side-by-side with them" through the recovery process. Regarding the flooding in Waterloo/Cedar Falls, she said those interested in helping out should contact the Iowa Volunteer Hotline at 800.447.1985.

4. DES MOINES PRESBYTERY BLOG UPDATES RELIEF EFFORTS: Kim Coulter, director of communications for the Presbytery of Des Moines, has established a blog on the presbytery's Web site that is currently updating flood responses. Among other items, the blog notes, "Also, our Presbyterian Disaster Assistance person in Iowa, Don Hampton, informs us that the Iowa Disaster Resource Council, a group of faith traditions, non-profit relief agencies and government agencies is working to set up a volunteer coordinator to which we will all refer people. It is also possible that a PDA staffer will be coming to Des Moines to coordinate PDA work state-wide. The main thing to know is that we are working with our other faith tradition partners right now. Our biggest needs will come as the water recedes. This will be a long haul and require lots of volunteers. One note from the Resource Council is: DO NOT SEND CLOTHES. There will be some specific clothing needs articulated, but right now clothes are not needed." More of the blog can be found at <http://presbyteryofdesmoines.blogspot.com/2008/06/pda-responds-to-floods-and-storms-in.html>. The presbytery's Web site is www.presbyteryofdesmoines.org.

5. JOHN KNOX BEGINS CLEAN-UP AFTER RECENT FLOODS: Writing Monday, June 16, Ken Meunier, transitional acting executive presbyter for the Presbytery of John Knox, noted that heavy rains June 6-12 caused flooding for the second time in 10 months in that presbytery's Minnesota counties of Fillmore and Houston and the Wisconsin counties of Vernon, Richland, Crawford and Iowa. He wrote, "After three days of sunshine the waters have receded and the cleanup is beginning in most areas. This has allowed most individuals to return to their homes. A considerable amount of farm land has been affected by this flooding with crops destroyed and land washed away by erosion. Homes over this wide area have been damaged with everything from flooded basements to being literally washed downstream. Several of our churches had water in their basements but thankfully none were badly damaged." He noted that Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is actively working in the presbytery, and added that the presbytery's Web site, www.jknox.org/flood.htm, will post requests for needs and volunteers as they arise.

6. COE COLLEGE REPORTS 'SAFE, DRY' ON ITS WEB SITE: According to its Web site, Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, - www.coe.edu - "is safe and dry, with the college poised to become fully operational in stages over the next couple of weeks. College officials remain cautiously optimistic that campus programs, camps and conferences, including summer research, may restart in stages beginning on Monday, June 30." In an email dated Tuesday, June 17, Kristin Hutson, Coe chaplain, wrote: "Coe email just became up and running last night. ... Only our physical plant was flooded. Unfortunately, [that] is where our circuit is so half the campus is still without power. ... The worse part of this for Coe is that at least four of our employees lost their homes several others suffered greatly. Please keep us in your prayers and thoughts."

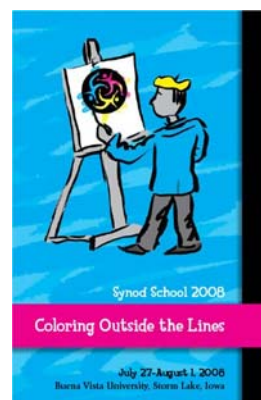
7. IOWA CAMPUS MINISTRY SURVIVES, PROVIDES ASSISTANCE: When asked about the status of campus ministries at the University of Iowa, Iowa City, Nancy Olthoff, director of United Campus Ministry, wrote on Wednesday, June 17: "Campus Ministry is fine. Our office and my home office were on high ground. The Association of Campus Ministers sent a letter of support to the president and vice present this morning telling of our support and our willingness to assist as needed. I've worked a couple of days in the Red Cross shelter because the scheduled orientation for freshmen students was cancelled this week on the campus. I am also working with some long term flood relief efforts that I hope will be able to mobilize students to contribute."

8. HILLCREST LOOKS FOR WAYS TO HELP IN DISASTER RELIEF: Gary Gansemer, president of Hillcrest Family Services, a mission partner of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies in Dubuque, Iowa, wrote Wednesday, June 18: "We ended up with no problems for any of our facilities. One staff person in Iowa City lost his apartment. We are mobilizing to see how best to meet the needs of our communities and churches over the next few months not just days." Hillcrest can be found online at www.hillcrest-fs.org.

9. CHURCHES IN CENTRAL NEBRASKA RECEIVE CHALLENGE: When the Synod of Lakes and Prairies issued a disaster update Monday, June 16, Bob Houser, executive presbyter in the Presbytery of Central Nebraska, saw it as an opportunity to issue a challenge to churches in that presbytery. The disaster update included a note addressing the need for cleanup buckets in the flooded areas. When Houser forwarded the update to the mailing list of the presbytery, Houser opened with a short note: "We would like to challenge each church in the presbytery to provide at least two buckets. Angie [Palmer] is planning to talk with Menards in Kearney, Builders Warehouse and other sources to provide the actual buckets. Please let us know in the presbytery office as soon as possible if your church accepts this challenge and what your pledge will be. If you don't want to provide the actual product approximately \$50 will supply a bucket."

10. 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>.

11. 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.

12. MINNESOTA CHURCH AMONG 15 SEMIFINALISTS IN VIDEO CHALLENGE: A video produced by the youth group at Hope Presbyterian Church, Spicer, Minn., in the Minnesota Valleys Presbytery, is one of 15 semifinalists in the inaugural Youth Video Challenge sponsored by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation on its social networking site, ymiLIVE.org. The ymiLIVE.org site was launched in January 2008 to create an online community for young Presbyterians, their parents and all who share a commitment to the active support of PC(USA) youth ministry and mission. "It's fellowship without boundaries," said Foundation public relations officer Barbara Juckett. The Youth Video Challenge ran from March 1 to June 1. More than 100 PC(USA) youth groups submitted short videos creatively expressing the theme of this year's 218th General Assembly: "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8). The Foundation's social networking site is www.ymilive.org. The full Presbyterian News Service story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08442.

13. TCA CHURCH SENDS YOUTH 'HUNGER' MISSION TO HOMESTEAD: Valley Community Presbyterian Church in Golden Valley, Minn., within the Twin Cities Area Presbytery, is keeping their junior high mission trip within the bounds of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, going to Lincoln, Neb., in Homestead Presbytery. Seven students, led by Sarah Bigwood, youth director, are making the trip June 18-22 with the theme, "Valley Youth: Taking a Bit Out of Hunger." They will travel through Eastern Nebraska on Wednesday and should arrive in Lincoln in just enough time to eat dinner and play with some of the kids at a local food kitchen. They will stay in the Lincoln area working with the Lincoln Food Bank and People's City Mission, learning what these agencies do to alleviate hunger. Eastridge Presbyterian Church of Lincoln is the host church for the mission, and Bigwood credits the Rev. Jim Crelin, senior pastor at Eastridge, for making the trip possible.

14. 'FRIENDS OF CLEARWATER DAY' SET JULY 12: Described as "a day of fun and sun for the whole family, young and old and everyone in between," Presbyterian Clearwater Forest has slated "Friends of Clearwater Day" Saturday, July 12. The day will provide the opportunity to explore the camp on trails and water, relax, swim, play games, listen to live music, and learn about the camp from staff and board members. Camping or Lodging is available on Friday and Saturday nights on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations are required. Information and registration materials can be found at www.clearwaterforest.org/2008docs/2008_Friends_Invitation.pdf.

15. REGIONAL COMMUNICATORS CONFERENCE PLANNED IN ILLINOIS: Part of the mission of the Presbyterian Communicators Network is to connect with one another, provide training, share best practices and grow as communicators and Presbyterians. From the Midwest to the west, from now through October, the Communicators Network has slated two more regional conferences, including one that will serve communicators in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies at the Stronghold Conference Center in Oregon, Ill., Aug. 25-27. Some scholarships are available. To learn more about the conferences, check out the network's spot on the Web site of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at <http://www.pcusa.org/comnet/>.

16. 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.

17. UDTS STUDENT NAMED 2008 LYDIA SCHOLAR: University of Dubuque Theological Seminary Master of Divinity candidate Heidi Smith has been named the 2008 Lydia Scholar by The Network of Presbyterian Women in Leadership. The Lydia Fund is a

scholarship program for women who have experienced God's call to become ordained pastors in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and who have a vision of spiritual renewal within the denomination. The complete story is at <http://www.dbq.edu/news/news1.cfm?ID=386>.

18. CARROLL STUDENT AMONG RECIPIENTS OF ROBINSON AWARD: The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has awarded scholarships to nine students in this year's Samuel Robinson competition. Awards ranging from \$4,500 to \$6,000 went to students at Alma College, Carroll College, Grove City College, Presbyterian College, Queens University of Charlotte, Rhodes College, Westminster (Pa.) College and Whitworth University, which had two recipients. To qualify for the award, students had to be members of the PC (USA) and juniors or seniors at a PC(USA)-related college. They also had to recite answers to the Westminster Shorter Catechism and write a 2,000-word essay on the topic: "If you were responsible for providing opportunities on your campus to reach out to students struggling with their faith, what would you do?" The essays were judged to determine how much each student received. The best essays will be posted next month at www.pcusa.org/financialaid.

19. WHITWORTH, MACALESTER STUDENTS WIN OUTLOOK PRIZES: The Presbyterian Outlook magazine has awarded its second annual "Church-College Partnership" prize of \$1,000 to Katherine Skattebo, a 2008 graduate of Whitworth University. Jessica Hawkinson, a 2008 graduate of Macalester College, received a second prize award worth \$200. Their essays will be published in The Outlook's annual higher education issue in September. Twenty-seven applicants wrote essays on the subject, "How my education at a PC(USA)-related college has prepared me for significant service and leadership."

20. JAMESTOWN COLLEGE GETS \$1 MILLION GIFT: Jamestown (N.D.) College, a Presbyterian college in the Presbytery of Northern Plains, has received a gift of \$1 million from Reuben and Clarice Liechty of Jamestown. The funds will be used to renovate historic Taber Hall. "Taber Hall has a lot of history," says Reuben Liechty, a member of the College's Board of Trustees. "Almost any student who attended Jamestown College would have memories of that building." The complete story can be found at www.jc.edu/campus/campusClips.php.

21. PENSIONS.ORG NEWS PROVIDES USEFUL INFORMATION: The new Pensions.org Web site - www.pensions.org - features informative and educational news stories. Some of the most recent articles include:

- [Salaries in the Parish Ministry 2008 Salary Study](#)
- [Median Salaries and Minimums and Maximums](#)
- [Getting through the Grief Process](#)
- [Celebrate World No Tobacco Day](#)
- [The Board of Pensions Receives Two Hermes Creative Awards](#)
- [Controlling Your Blood Pressure](#)
- [Many Seniors Suffer from Sleep Problems](#)
- [Strength & Resilience Program Helps Members Cope with Stress](#)
- [Introducing Stewardship of Self](#)

22. VALENTINE REFLECTS ON FIRST 2 YEARS: Halfway through her first four-year term, General Assembly Council (GAC) Executive Director Linda Valentine is already eager for more. "I would love to do a second term," Valentine said in a recent interview with the Presbyterian News Service. "I've felt a great sense of call and boundless energy. The more people ask me (about a second term) the more clear it becomes." The complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08445.

23. JOINING HEARTS, HANDS RECEIVES HALF-MILLION DOLLAR GIFT: Citing deep concerns for the health, education, and well-being of the world's children, an anonymous donor has made a gift of \$510,456 to the Mission Initiative: Joining Hearts and Hands - www.pcusa.org/joiningheartsandhands. The funds have been received and will ensure that six newmission co-workers will be sent to serve in positions in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Poland, Pakistan, and Costa Rica. The complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08449.

24. SMALL CHURCH SUNDAY IS JULY 13: Small Church Sunday, July 13, is a time for Presbyterians to gather together to celebrate and recognize the work of small congregations. This year's focus is cooperative ministry among smaller membership

churches. An increasing number of these congregations are recognizing the value of working together to enhance their engagement in ministry and mission. These churches are discovering that through collaboration they are able to accomplish much more than they could imagine doing alone. A collection of resources, including hymns, prayers, an offering and a list of suggested activities for congregations and presbyteries is available at www.pcusa.org/smallchurch/smallchurchsunday.htm.

25. GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADDRESSES DENOMINATION'S INTERNAL LIFE:

Though a number of recurring social justice concerns will be on the docket - Middle East peace, abortion, the Iraq war, and others - the agenda of the 218th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seems top-heavy with issues related to the internal life of the 2.3 million-member denomination. Those issues include the election of two top officers - the moderator and stated clerk - as well as a proposed revision of the PC(USA)'s Form of Government and steps toward greater cooperation among the myriad Presbyterian groups engaged in mission around the world. To learn more, go the Web site of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at <http://www.pcusa.org/ga218/>.

26. PEW PLANS RELEASE OF 2ND PART OF 'RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE:' The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life will release next week the second report of a landmark survey that examines the tremendous diversity of Americans' religious beliefs and practices as well as their social and political views. This new analysis follows the first report - <http://religions.pewforum.org/reports> - the U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, which was published in February 2008 and detailed the size and demographic characteristics of religious groups in the U.S. The online presentation of the findings, which includes interactive mapping, dynamic charts and a variety of other tools, will be available at noon EDT on June 23.

27. 'HARRY POTTER' AUTHOR SPEAKS AT HARVARD: J.K. Rowling, author of the best-selling "Harry Potter" book series, delivered the commencement address at Harvard this spring. In her address, titled "The Fringe Benefits of Failure, and the Importance of Imagination," she said, "There is an expiry date on blaming your parents for steering you in the wrong direction; the moment you are old enough to take the wheel, responsibility lies with you. What is more, I cannot criticize my parents for hoping that I would never experience poverty. They had been poor themselves, and I have since been poor, and I quite agree with them that it is not an ennobling experience." The entire address can be found at <http://harvardmagazine.com/go/jkrowling.html>.