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

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Just a couple more

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1. **SYNOD MEETING SCHEDULED APRIL 27-29:** The April meeting of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies is coming up next month – April 27-29. The “Notice and Call to Meeting” went out March 18. In some ways it seems the synod met just a week or so ago, but that was January and cold. But as Phil Brown, synod executive, wrote in his memo that went along with the call to meeting, “Comments about the continuing winter conditions, even as I write, are among the most common I hear.” The complete memo can be found at <http://www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/April%202008%20memo%20II.pdf>. In an effort to help sessions and presbyteries understand the ministry and mission of the synod, the synod has assembled an overview of its work. This overview can be found at <http://www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/SYNOD-MISSION-08.pdf>.

2. SOWER NOW POSTED ON SYNOD WEB SITE: The Sower, the newsletter of the Presbyterian Women in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, is now being posted on the synod's Web site. The first issue posted – March 2008 – is the group's mission issue. It contains multiple opportunities for both service and gifts. Among the stories in The Sower is one by Marilyn Stone, mission coordinator for the group. She wrote, "It didn't matter where I went, there was always a shortage of volunteers and the need for them is very great!" The complete issue can be found at <http://www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/Sower.pdf>.

The Sower

3. CHOIR DIRECTOR GROUP IN ORGANIZATIONAL STAGES: Do your choirs range in talent from "Almost Good Enough for the Met" to "Loves the Lord and Comes to Every Practice?" Do you listen to new choir music demos and think, "If only we had more tenors and basses, we could maybe do that song!" Do you have to count heads some Sundays to make sure you're going to have enough to do the hard song you have planned? Do you love doing the Christmas cantata but wish you could move to Tahiti until it's over? And most of all, do you love directing your choir? Do you enjoy the music and just survive the challenges?



If you answered yes to any of those questions, consider joining an online mailing list for small town church choir directors. Sherry Lord, choir director of Maine Presbyterian Church in Underwood, Minn., has a vision for what this group could do. Anyone who would like to join the group can go to <http://launch.groups.yahoo.com/group/choirdirectors/>. Lord can also be contacted at sherrine21@gmail.com.

4. SYNOD PARISH NURSE DATA BASE '1ST EDITION' CREATED: A recently created, self-reported database of parish nurses within the boundaries of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies has been established. If you are a parish nurse and would like a copy of this database or if you would like to be added to the database, you can contact Marcia Heyser at mbheyser1@aol.com. Heyser spearheaded the effort to create the database and is overseeing database updates. Parish nursing is an idea born out of the understanding of the healing ministry of the church and the need to return to health care that focuses on the whole person to emphasize wellness, disease prevention, and health promotion. Sometimes called the "Minister of Health," a parish nurse is a registered nurse with additional training who serves members of the congregation and often people in the community as well. Additional information about parish nursing can be found at www.pcusa.org/nationalhealth/parishnursing/index.htm.

5. CHALLENGES, CROSS, ONE-ANOTHER, LEADERSHIP ARTICLES POSTED: Four columns, from four different authors, have been added to the Web site of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. The Rev. Jerry Swanson, synod commissioner from the Presbytery of Dakota, has faced multiple challenges in the early months of 2008. He writes about those at www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/34-DAYS.pdf. The Rev. Matthew Miller, pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Sioux City, Iowa, wrote about the cross in an Easter column in that church's newsletter. That column is at www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/THE-CROSS.pdf. The Rev. Bob Houser, executive presbyter in the Presbytery of Central Nebraska, wrote about building community in that presbytery's newsletter. His column is at <http://www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/ONE-ANOTHERING.pdf>. And the Rev. Bob Cuthill, interim transitional executive presbyter in the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area, reviews "Building a Bridge as You Walk on It" at <http://www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/BUILDING-REVIEW.pdf>.

6. CLAIM FILED AGAINST TCA REGARDING ORDINATION RESTORATION: A remedial claim against the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area has been filed regarding the decision of the presbytery Jan. 26 to restore the ordination of Paul Capetz, an openly gay man. Nancy Grittman, the presbytery's stated clerk, wrote, "The stated clerk Synod of Lakes and Prairies has informed the presbytery that a remedial claim against the presbytery has been filed. The claim will be forwarded to the Permanent Judicial Commission of the synod for judgment." Grittman's complete announcement can be found at http://ptcaweb.typepad.com/emerge_the_blog/2008/03/a-special-annou.html.

7. JOHN KNOX PASSES OVERTURE IN RESPONSE TO PJC DECISION: The Presbytery of John Knox, responding to a recent decision of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission, has passed an overture which, if approved, could allow candidates to state objections based on conscience to the sexual behavior standards of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The complete story can be found at www.pres-outlook.org/tabid/2260/Article/7178/Default.aspx. To read the complete story will require registration at the site. Registration is free.

8. BOESAK SET TO PREACH AT CHURCH OF ALL NATIONS: The Rev. Dr. Allan Boesak, a leading anti-apartheid activist and a driving force for democracy in South Africa, will preach on "Racial Reconciliation: The Church's Great Unfinished Work," at the Church of All Nations in Columbia Heights, Minn., Sunday, April 6, at 6:30 p.m. There will be a time for questions and dialogue following the presentation. The flier supplied by the church can be found at www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/BOESAK.pdf.

9. EVANGELISM CONTINUES TO BE A TOUGH NUT TO CRACK: The Rev. Joan S. Gray, moderator of the 217th General Assembly, writes, "Evangelism continues to be a really tough nut to crack for many Presbyterians." She notes, "We worry about our shrinking churches, but we are not comfortable, by and large, talking with people outside the church (or sometimes inside it!) about our faith. What can we do to help change this culture of silence into one that connects with people who need to hear good news?" Gray's complete message can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08218.htm.

10. INFO ON MODERATOR CANDIDATES AT PC(USA) WEB SITE: Commissioners and advisory delegates to the 218th General Assembly will elect a moderator the first day of the assembly. To date four individuals are standing for moderator. A new Stated Clerk of the General Assembly will also be elected and the stated clerk nomination committee will announce its nominee by April 22. The news service stories announcing each moderator candidate can be found at www.pcusa.org/ga218/moderator.htm.

11. CHRISTIAN CHURCHES CALLED 'CHILDREN OF DIVORCE:' Writing in the March 17 issue of The Presbyterian Outlook, Tom Currie notes, "The truth is that God's people have always been better at splitting apart than in discovering their unity. That is our history. We are children of multiple divorces, splits that have occurred always for the best of reasons." Currie's complete column can be found at www.pres-outlook.org/tabid/2244/Article/7146/Default.aspx. To read the complete column will require registration at the site. Registration is free.

12. UD RANKS THIRD IN IOWA IN FUNDRAISING: The Council for Aid to Education (CAE) announced this week that the University of Dubuque has ranked third among colleges in the State of Iowa for the highest fundraising totals for 2007. The university is one of seven Presbyterian-related colleges and universities across the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.

The University's fundraising efforts yielded more than \$28 million in 2007, ranking third behind the University of Iowa and Iowa State University. The complete story can be found at www.dbq.edu/news/news1.cfm?ID=369.

13. RESIDENCE HALL CONSTRUCTION UNDER WAY AT CARROLL: Construction is under way on a 264-bed residence hall for Carroll College, Waukesha, Wis., on the College Avenue site of the former Waukesha Rubber Co. The four-story, 66-unit residence hall, at 324 W. College Ave., is also at the site of the former Clysmic Spring, which operated during Waukesha's famous Springs Era in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Water from the spring was shipped to New York by tanker car, bottled and served in fine city restaurants. The construction completion date is Aug. 1. Carroll students will occupy the building beginning in fall semester 2008. The college's Web site is www.cc.edu.

14. UNITED PLANS SPRING CONVOCATION APRIL 23-24: United Theological Seminary, New Brighton, Minn., has set its Spring Convocation April 23-24 with the theme "Being the Church in a Postmodern World." John Shelby Spong will give three addresses during the event: "Rethinking God in a Post Religious World", "Proclaiming Christ in a Post Christian World," and "The Purpose of a Church in the 21st Century." In addition, there will be an address by Eleazar S. Fernandez, professor of constructive theology at UTS, on "Reimagining the Church: The Challenge of Our Globalized World," and a panel discussion on the Convocation topic. More details and online registration are available at www.unitedseminary.edu/ce/convocation.asp.

15. HASTINGS STUDENTS SPEND BREAK WITH HABITAT: Ten Hastings (Neb.) College students spent spring break, March 16-21, in Stroud, Okla., volunteering with Habitat for Humanity International. The students are affiliated with the college's chapter of Habitat for Humanity. The trip sponsor was Lloyd McIntyre, a Hastings College resident director. The complete story can be found at www.hastings.edu/igsbase/igstemplate.cfm?SRC=MD006&SRCN=articledetails&GnavID=144&SnavID=194&TnavID=&NewsID=1523.

16. PRESBYTERY SPEAKS THROUGH CHURCH NEWSLETTERS, BULLETINS: The March 19 issue of Out and About, the newsletter of the Presbytery of East Iowa, contained the following note, "Every month the presbytery sends out an announcement about how your unified mission dollars are being spent. If you haven't seen this in your bulletin or newsletter, send us the contact name of the person in your church who prepares the bulletins and/or newsletters and we will make sure they receive it." It's a great way to reach the people in the congregations. In a survey late last year, 85 percent of church-goers in the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys indicated they had read each of the past four issues of their church's newsletter and nearly three-fourths – 73 percent – said they read bulletin inserts "almost all or all the time."

17. CHRISTIANITY TODAY ISSUES 2008 BOOK AWARDS: Christianity Today magazine announced 10 winners in its annual book awards, choosing winners from 359 titles submitted by 49 publishers. The books were published in 2007. In addition to the winners, the magazine gave 11 awards of merit. The winners and comments from the judges can be found at <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/april/10.28.html>.