

MAY 22, 2009

The synod can be found online at
www.lakesandprairies.org.

News around the synod

- [1.](#) Franklin church cited for interfaith work
- [2.](#) Hispanic church development receives PC(USA) grant
- [3.](#) Synod votes to maintain per capita level in 2010
- [4.](#) Bismarck church has Child Care Center as mission
- [5.](#) 'Glory Gang' puppet troupe available for summer
- [6.](#) Lakes, Prairies on Facebook

Camp news

- [7.](#) Clearwater Forest offers scholarships, seeks donors

Campus news

- [8.](#) CC.edu domain becomes carrollu.edu
- [9.](#) Presbyterian Outlook focuses on commencement

News around the PC(USA)

- [10.](#) Alaska church seeks 10 workers with construction skills



Interfaith Toolkit

1. FRANKLIN, WIS., CHURCH CITED FOR INTERFAITH

WORK: The Rev. Deb Bergson-Graham, pastor of the Faith Presbyterian Church in Franklin, Wis., serves a church that has taken steps into a new Christian-Muslim relationship, according to the Interfaith Relations Office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

An Interfaith Relations newsletter noted, "One of our churches has had good experience in building Christian-Muslim relationships by using a straightforward model of hospitality." Bergson-Graham's description of the program can be found at <http://www.pcusa.org/interfaith/toolkit/wisconsin.htm>. More details regarding the Interfaith Relations Office can be found at www.pcusa.org/interfaith/. ([Return to top](#))

2. HISPANIC CHURCH DEVELOPMENT RECEIVES PC(USA) GRANT:

The Mission Development Resources Committee of the Office of Evangelism and Church Growth of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved a \$100,000 Mission Program Grant to the Presbyterian Hispanic New Church Development in the Presbytery of North Central Iowa. The project will receive the grant over a five-year period, beginning with an initial disbursement of \$30,000 in 2010. The Synod of Lakes and Prairies had earlier approved a Mission Program Grant totaling \$70,000 for the same project. That grant, too, will be disbursed over five years, beginning with \$20,000 in 2010. ([Return to top](#))

3. SYNOD VOTES TO MAINTAIN PER CAPITA LEVEL IN 2010:

Synod of Lakes and Prairies commissioners decided at their springing meeting last month to forego an increase in the synod's per capita rate in 2010. Synod per capita currently stands at \$4.80. The synod's spring meeting took place April 26-28 at Mount Olivet Retreat Center in Farmington, Minn. It marks the first time since 1999 that there has been no year-over-year increase in per capita. The per capita apportionment is calculated based on the funds necessary for the synod to do its essential ecclesiastical work. Per capita is apportioned based on the total church membership within the synod. Presbyteries and General Assembly also have per capita apportionments and the synod's apportionment is the smallest of the three. A detailed description of per capita can be found on the denomination's Web site at www.pcusa.org/percapita/. The importance of per capita can be found at www.pcusa.org/percapita/importance.htm. Additional information about the synod's spring meeting can be found on the [synod's Web site](#). ([Return to top](#))

11. Reyes-Chow writes, 'Who God hopes we will become'

12. Parsons addresses 'the higher call'

13. 'Thoughtful Christian' introduces

discount

14. Clean Water U slates first summer session

15. PC(USA) reopens Environmental Ministry Office

16. New staff join Racial Ethnic Young Women Together

17. Ministry site established for 'Autumn Saints'

18. PC(USA) COM Resource Team issues letter on pastoral call

And just one more

19. Making the case for God



4. BISMARCK CHURCH HAS CHILD-CARE CENTER AS MISSION:

In the mid-1990s First Presbyterian Church in Bismarck, N.D., opened the doors of the church's Child Care Center and the Center has been operating successfully as a mission of the church ever since. The Child Care Center serves 38 to 40 children, and celebrated its 14th birthday last fall. The Center is open to infants, charges only when a child is at the Center, not a flat weekly or monthly fee, and offers scholarships to low-income families. The Center's Web site notes the " Child Care Center provides opportunities for all church members to actively volunteer in whatever manner is appropriate for them. Financial gifts, gifts of supplies such as paper or cleaning products, toys, books and the gift of time are received with enthusiasm." The Child

Care Center is online at www.fpcbismarck.com/child/. The church's unique steeple is at left. ([Return to top](#))

5. 'GLORY GANG' PUPPET TROUPE AVAILABLE THIS SUMMER:

The "Glory Gang" puppet troupe, which makes its home at First Presbyterian Church in Auburn, Neb., is available for worship services or appearances at other church events this summer, according to a note sent out this week by the Rev. Lowell Knauss, interim executive presbyter in Homestead Presbytery. Knauss wrote, "This is a quality act and has in the past gone out on the road. They have stayed close to home the last two years and are now looking to mission out again." More information about the "Glory Gang" is available from the Rev. Tom Osborne, pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Auburn, by writing toaubpc@windstream.net. ([Return to top](#))



6. LAKES AND PRAIRIES NOW ON FACEBOOK: The Synod of Lakes and Prairies is now on Facebook and readers of Keeping in Touch who are on Facebook are invited to become members of the synod's group. If you aren't a member of Facebook, you will have to join before becoming a member of the group. If you are a Facebook member, or once you join Facebook (joining is easy with the simple instructions at www.facebook.com) search for "Synod of Lakes and Prairies" using the search bar in the upper right corner of the screen. Being on Facebook, or joining Facebook, and finding the synod is the easy part. The tough part is content. Facebook is a social-networking tool. The synod will provide periodic updates (note the Synod School event) but the site will only be effective if it becomes a place where communication takes place among its members. ([Return to top](#))



7. CLEARWATER FOREST OFFERS SCHOLARSHIPS, SEEKS

DONORS: A goal at Presbyterian Clearwater Forest, a camp at Deerwood, Minn., is that no prospective camper will be denied due to financial need, according to David Jeremiason, executive director. Last year, "at least one of every four campers in our summer programs received financial assistance to attend camp. We all know that there are many families facing serious financial pressures and we want to make sure that camp is a possibility for every person who wishes to attend," Jeremiason wrote. Apart

from applying for camp scholarships, he asked others to consider making donations to the camp's scholarship fund. Noting that the camp wants to raise \$20,000 in scholarship funds, he added, "We do not have enough in our scholarship fund to cover all the requests that we project for this summer." Camp s cholarship applications can be found at

www.clearwaterforest.org. ([Return to top](#))

8. CC.EDU DOMAIN BECOMES CARROLLU.EDU: Earlier this month the domain name of Carroll University, Waukesha, Wis., one of the synod's associated colleges and universities, changed from cc.edu to carrollu.edu. The change comes one year after the university's board of trustees voted to change the school's name from Carroll College to Carroll University. All cc.edu email addresses also have changed to carrollu.edu. The university is online at www.carrollu.edu. ([Return to top](#))



9. MAY 25 PRESBYTERIAN OUTLOOK FOCUSES ON COMMENCEMENT: The May 25 issue of The Presbyterian Outlook gave a plug to the many Presbyterian institutions of higher education. Addressing the church-college-faculty

relationships at the Presidents Conference of the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities, Storm Bailey, associate professor and coordinator of the philosophy program at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, said, "Christian vision and mission don't have a monopoly on truth-seeking, but Christian vision and mission can and should promote it as well as anybody and better than many." The issue also quotes Jeff Bullock, president of the University of Dubuque, in an article titled "Seminaries tightening belts in tough economic times." Outlook can be found online at www.pres-outlook.org. ([Return to top](#))

10. ALASKA CHURCH SEEKS 10 WORKERS WITH CONSTRUCTION SKILLS: The Rev. Deva McQueen, pastor of Metlakatla (Alaska) Presbyterian Church, sent a note to the synod and presbyteries this week seeking mission volunteers. She wrote, "Please get the word out that [Metlakatla Presbyterian Church] is able to host a group of approximately 10 workers with light construction skills to help in renovating our church. Lodging is no problem." She can be contacted at rev.deva.mcqueen@gmail.com or by telephone at 907.886.7581. ([Return to top](#))



11. REYES-CHOW WRITES, 'WHO GOD HOPES WE WILL BECOME:' The Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow, moderator of the 218th General Assembly, opened his monthly column, "May is a special month for the Reyes-Chow/Pugh household. Two of us celebrate birthdays one day apart. This year, our middle daughter Abby turned eight and I hit the big 40. Birthdays are a funny thing. On one level, it is another day to be thankful to be alive. At the same time, it is an opportunity to reflect on how one is doing on one's walk with God, and how we as parents are doing in caring for these gifts God has left under our care." The complete column can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/09388. ([Return to top](#))



12. PARSONS ADDRESSES 'THE HIGHER CALL:' The Rev. Gradye Parson, stated clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), opened his monthly column, "Maybe we need an Extreme Planet Makeover. As if 3.7 million people unemployed since January, tornadoes, and flooding were not enough, now we have swine flu. I am sure there are locusts warming up somewhere. The difference between the first three disasters and swine flu is that the first three bring people together." The complete column can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/09391. ([Return to top](#))

13. 'THOUGHTFUL CHRISTIAN' INTRODUCES DISCOUNT: The Web-based resource center, The Thoughtful Christian, has introduced a 40 percent discount for new and existing subscribers. From now through December 2009, new one-year subscriptions will be offered for \$195, down from the regular rate of \$350, while renewals will be \$150, down from the regular rate of \$225. The temporary discount has been implemented to aid subscribers struggling with a difficult economic climate. Details can be found at www.thethoughtfulchristian.com/new%20site/main/NewDeal.asp. ([Return to top](#))

14. CLEAN WATER U SLATES FIRST SUMMER SESSION: Living Waters for the World (www.livingwatersfortheworld.org/cwusched.php), a mission program of the Synod of Living Waters that trains people in the installation, partnership and hygiene of clean water systems, will hold its first ever summer training session of "Clean Water U." The program will run July 22-26 at Hopewell Camp and Conference Center, Oxford, Miss. The summer session has been added to accommodate students and teachers who have been unable to attend training in the spring and fall. The complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/09399. ([Return to top](#))

15. PC(USA) REOPENS ENVIRONMENTAL MINISTRY OFFICE: In response to action by the 218th General Assembly the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has officially reopened its Environmental Ministry Office. The office had ceased its work in 2006 after having been in operation since 1991. The complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/pressreleases/gac09014.htm. ([Return to top](#))

16. NEW STAFF JOIN RACIAL-ETHNIC YOUNG WOMEN TOGETHER: Two staff persons

have joined the office of women's leadership development this spring to support the ministry of Racial Ethnic Young Women Together. Lydia Kim, ministry specialist for women's leadership, began in April. She serves as support for and the liaison with both Racial Ethnic Young Women Together and the National Network of Presbyterian College Women. Clarisse Durnell began as field staff for REYWT this month. She will support Kim in the office of women's leadership and NNPCW and REYWT. Additional details about Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) can be found at <http://www.pcusa.org/raciaethnic/>. ([Return to top](#))

17. MINISTRY SITE ESTABLISHED FOR 'AUTUMN SAINTS:' With the hope of providing written and Web-based resources on mid- to later-life spirituality, Autumn Saints wants to help churches maintain connections to older adults. Sandra Escontrias, former director of family ministries for First Presbyterian Church in DeLand, Fla., and now director of Autumn Saints, wrote, "These materials have been produced because it is hard to find Bible-based materials that challenge and help the transition from midlife to senior adulthood." According to the organization's Web site, materials are designed for use in small groups located in local churches, retirement centers or nursing homes. Autumn Saints is online at www.autumnsaints.com. ([Return to top](#))

18. PC(USA) COM RESOURCE TEAM ISSUES LETTER ON PASTORAL CALLS: In a letter to presbytery executives, stated clerks and Committee on Ministry moderators, the Committee on Ministry Resource Team of the Church Leadership Connection of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) pointed out an "increase in the number of inquiries from ministers of other denominations" and noted there are "over 2,200 PCUSA ministers and candidates seeking calls and only 651 open positions."

The letter went on to note, "There are currently over 412 first call seekers and only about 187 positions open to a first call candidate. Many of our candidates have families to support and educational debt to repay."

The letter addressed the assistance that can be offered by the Church Leadership Connection staff. Additional resources are located online at www.pcusa.org/clc/whatis.htm.

Members of the team issuing the letter were Marcia Clark Myers, director of the Office of Vocation; Joyce Lieberman, associate for Call System Support; and Doska Ross, manager for Polity Guidance and Training. ([Return to top](#))



19. MAKING THE CASE FOR GOD: A press release from Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Lanham, Md., noted the company recently published a book that argues in favor of the existence of God. The release noted, "Some of the brightest scientific minds of our time have made incredible insights into the earliest origins of the universe but have failed to ultimately discover why there is something rather than nothing. ... In 'A Case for the Existence of God,' Dean Overman examines the latest theories about the origins of the universe and explains why even the most sophisticated science can take us only so far." Overman is a former senior partner of the international law firm of Winston & Strawn. He was a

Templeton scholar at Oxford University in the fields of information theory, physics, and religion. He also studied theology at Princeton Theological Seminary and was a visiting scholar at Harvard University. Information about the book can be found on [Amazon](#). ([Return to top](#))