



MAY 9, 2008

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

Synod news, information

1. SYNOD WILL MODIFY HIGHER-ED MINISTRIES FUNDING
2. PROGRAM COORDINATION COMMITTEE URGES NMPF CONSULTATIONS
3. SYNOD APPROVES SMALL PER CAPITA INCREASE

Presbytery news, information

4. MUSIC DIRECTOR CREATES ONLINE FORUM ABOUT WORSHIP
5. MILWAUKEE GROUP AMONG THOSE AWARDED GRANTS
6. REGISTRATION DEADLINE NEARS FOR 'SCHOOL FOR PASTORS'

Presbyterian colleges, universities

7. JAMESTOWN COLLEGE HOSTS DAKOTA SPIRIT WORKSHOPS

General Assembly news, information

8. THREE TO CHALLENGE COMMITTEE NOMINEE FOR STATED CLERK
9. GA COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP ANNOUNCED
10. NEW LEADERS, COLLABORATION TO HIGHLIGHT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Board of Pensions news, information

11. RE-LAUNCH OF PENSIONS.ORG INCLUDES BENEFITS-CONNECT TOOL

National PC(USA) news, information

12. PDA EARMARKS \$100,000 TO AID MYANMAR
13. 'RECIPE FOR HOPE' KICKS OFF ON MOTHER'S DAY
14. GAC APPROVES 2009-2010 MISSION BUDGETS
15. GAC REJECTS SEPARATE INCORPORATION OF PDA
16. SYNOD OF SUN APPOINTS ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION
17. SPAHR FOUND INNOCENT IN SAME-SEX MARRIAGE CASE

And just one more

18. BLOG FEATURES VOTING PATTERNS OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS

1. **SYNOD WILL MODIFY HIGHER-ED MINISTRIES FUNDING:** The Synod of Lakes and Prairies voted to terminate its current practice of funding post secondary

education ministries at the close of 2011, while agreeing to fund the next cycle, 2010-2011, at reduced amounts. Beginning in 2012, the synod will consider making one-time grants to post secondary education ministries if funds are available. Providing background information to support the action, the synod's Ecclesiastical Relations Committee noted, "Funds are less available and when ERC received applications for funding for 2008-2009 we made a commitment to site visits of those ministries. The visits will provide an opportunity to connect with these programs and let them know, as we look toward the next funding cycle, there will be limited financial resources." The synod also voted in favor of the committee's recommendation that applicants in 2010-2011 must have been funded in the 2008-2009 cycle.

2. PROGRAM COORDINATION COMMITTEE URGES NMPF CONSULTATIONS:

After reviewing the report from its task force "charged with exploring ways to address and consult with presbyteries regarding the anticipated elimination of National Mission Partnership Funds," the synod's Program Coordination Committee asked the synod to proceed with presbytery consultations addressing the implications of the loss of the funds. In making its request, the committee suggested that the synod follow a task force recommendation for staffing the consultations with presbytery councils. The task force recommendation stated, "The synod team for each such consultation will include Phil Brown, synod executive, and/or Diana Barber, associate executive for leadership development, plus the synod commissioners from each of the participating presbyteries."

3. SYNOD APPROVES SMALL PER CAPITA INCREASE: The Synod of Lakes and Prairies approved an 11-cent increase in its per capita apportionment for 2009, increasing the rate to \$4.80. The per capita assessment is calculated based on the funds necessary for the synod to do its essential ecclesiastical work, and the total church membership within the synod. The Program Coordination Committee, which recommended the increase, noted, "With the decrease in membership and based on the budget requests ... and using the same percentages for those items not funded 100 percent by per capita, we can justify an increase in per capita."

4. MUSIC DIRECTOR CREATES ONLINE FORUM ABOUT WORSHIP: Have you ever wondered what other churches in the Presbytery were doing on a certain Sunday-- what hymns were working for them, if there was a drama that was well-received, if there was a sanctuary banner or communion table decoration people found particularly inspirational, how they were coming into a closer relationship with Christ? Chris Werner, music director at First Presbyterian Church in Bettendorf, Iowa, has created an online forum to discuss worship in the Presbytery of East Iowa. The forum can be found at <http://worshipconnection.ning.com>. Werner can be contacted at bpcworship@hotmail.com. *(This information first appeared in the May 1 edition of Out and About, the newsletter of the Presbytery of East Iowa)*

5. MILWAUKEE GROUP AMONG THOSE AWARDED GRANTS: The Presbyterian Hunger Program, in partnership with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Small Church and Community Ministry office, recently allocated \$214,000 to 39 congregation-based community organizations in urban and rural areas across the country. The organizations are broad-based coalitions of congregations working in partnership with other community organizations that address quality of life issues such as affordable housing, public healthcare for children, living wage and public education. The Greater Milwaukee (Wis.) Sponsors received \$7,500 to work on affordable housing, healthcare, public education and

living wage issues. This complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08347.htm.

6. REGISTRATION DEADLINE NEARS FOR 'SCHOOL FOR PASTORS:' The 52nd annual Omaha Presbyterian School for Pastors is slated on the Hastings (Neb.) College campus July 9-16. Several eminent educators will serve as faculty for the school. The registration deadline is May 15. Additional information can be obtained from the Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation by calling 402.397.5138 or 888.244.4944, or at www.omaha-sem-found.org/education_pastorsschool.html. *(This information first appeared in the April 27-28 edition of Monday Morning in the Presbytery, the newsletter of the Presbytery of Missouri River Valley.)*

7. JAMESTOWN COLLEGE HOSTS DAKOTA SPIRIT WORKSHOPS: Jamestown (N.D.) College, one of seven Presbyterian colleges and universities within the synod, is hosting the Dakota Spirit Writing Workshops June 1-6 on its campus. The workshops will be led by North Dakota Poet Laureate and Jamestown College writer in residence Larry Woiwode, poet and performance artist Shadd Piehl, filmmaker Christopher Jacobs and children's author Roxane Salonen. The schedule is arranged so participants may attend two of the four workshops. Teachers can earn up to three Continuing Education Units, and undergraduates can earn three college credits. This complete story can be found at www.jc.edu/campus/campusClips.php#523.



8. THREE TO CHALLENGE COMMITTEE NOMINEE FOR STATED CLERK: The Stated Clerk Nominating Committee announced May 9 that three challengers have stepped forward to stand for General Assembly Stated Clerk against the committee's nominee, the Rev. Gradye Parsons. Under the General Assembly's standing rules, the 13 applicants who were not chosen by the committee had until May 7 to notify the committee of their intention to stand for the office. The candidates standing against Parsons - who has been director of operations for the Office of the General Assembly for the past eight years - are the Rev. Edward H. Koster, stated clerk of Detroit Presbytery; the Rev. Winfield "Casey" Jones, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Pearland, Texas; and the Rev. William P. Tarbell, pastor of Saluda (S.C.) Presbyterian Church. This complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08369.htm.

9. GA COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP ANNOUNCED: The Office of the General Assembly has announced the committee leadership for the 218th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in San Jose, Calif., June 21-28. Nearly 1,000 items of business to be considered by the Assembly will be processed by 17 Assembly Committees. Each committee will have a moderator and vice-moderator - chosen by 217th General Assembly Moderator Joan Gray from the ranks of the 852 elected commissioners to the Assembly - plus a committee assistant and a parliamentarian/recorder appointed by General Assembly Stated Clerk Clifton Kirkpatrick. Among those named are five from the Synod of Lakes and Prairies: the Rev. Michael Lukens, Winnebago, parliamentarian/recorder for the Form of Government Committee; Elder Craig Howard, John Knox, committee assistant for the Mission Coordination and Budgets Committee; the Rev. Sarai Schnucker Rice, Twin Cities Area, committee assistant for the Peacemaking and International Issues Committee; the Rev. Walter Chuquimia, Twin Cities Area, vice moderator, Worship and Spiritual Renewal Committee; and the Rev. Celeste Lasich,

Minnesota Valleys, vice moderator for the Youth Committee. This complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08354.htm.

10. NEW LEADERS, COLLABORATION TO HIGHLIGHT GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

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. This complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08344.htm.

11. RE-LAUNCH OF PENSIONS.ORG INCLUDES BENEFITS-CONNECT TOOL:

The Board of Pensions recently launched a new version of its Web site, www.pensions.org, featuring increased functionality, expanded information, and intuitive navigation. A highlight of the new site is BenefitsConnect, an online tool that provides active Plan members secure access to their personal benefits information. Not only can members submit changes to their contact information and dependent status, but they can use online calculators to estimate their pension and death benefits. The new site also features an abundance of new information and resources, making it the "go to" source for details on the plans, programs, and services the Board offers. Feedback is welcomed by emailing communications@pensions.org or calling 800-773-7752 (800-PRESPLAN).

12. PDA EARMARKS \$100,000 TO AID MYANMAR: Presbyterian Disaster Assistance - www.pcusa.org/pda - has committed \$100,000 in emergency assistance to aid survivors of last week's devastating cyclone in Myanmar, the worst disaster the country has suffered in years. The money, which is being taken from the One Great Hour of Sharing offering and designated relief funds, will go to provide food and shelter for survivors in the isolated Southeast Asian country, according to a May 8 situation report issued by PDA, the disaster-response and relief agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08363.htm.



13. 'RECIPE FOR HOPE' KICKS OFF ON MOTHER'S DAY:

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) partner Bread for the World - www.bread.org - is calling on people of faith to respond to a growing global hunger crisis by adding their voices to its Recipe for Hope campaign, which runs from Mother's Day, May 11, through Father's Day, June 15. The five-week campaign encourages participants to stock food pantries, educate others about the hunger crisis, fasting, praying, raising funds for Christian anti-hunger programs, focusing worship services on hunger issues and writing letters urging members of Congress to enact long-term



solutions to hunger. This complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08362.htm.

14. GAC APPROVES 2009-2010 MISSION BUDGETS: The General Assembly Council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved General Assembly Mission Budgets late last month totaling \$110.3 million for 2009 and \$107.6 million for 2010. The budgets, which now go to the upcoming 218th General Assembly in San Jose, Calif., in June for adoption, call for no GAC staff cuts, create a new Environmental Ministries office, and for the first time in 50 years increase the number of overseas mission co-workers - from 196 this year to 215 in 2009 and 220 in 2010. This complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08328.htm.

15. GAC REJECTS SEPARATE INCORPORATION OF PDA: The General Assembly Council voted unanimously late last month not to separately incorporate Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. The vote, with no debate, came after a GAC task force to study the incorporation proposal, told the council that hopes for incorporation may not be realized sufficiently to justify the increased effort, expense, energy reporting requirements, staff and tensions with partner churches that incorporation might entail. This complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08329.htm.

16. SYNOD OF SUN APPOINTS ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION: The Synod of the Sun, a regional governing body of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), unanimously appointed an administrative commission on April 25 to examine concerns regarding church property and presbytery leadership in South Louisiana Presbytery. A letter from a group of pastors and elders in South Louisiana to Synod Executive Judy Fletcher, dated April 8, "expressed a concern regarding our presbytery's leadership, particularly pertaining to the presbytery's response to churches seeking title to their properties." This complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08336.htm.

17. SPAHR FOUND INNOCENT IN SAME-SEX MARRIAGE CASE: In a reversal of a lower church court ruling, the Rev. Jane Adams Spahr has been found not guilty of violating the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s constitution by performing same-sex 'marriages' for two couples. The complicated verdict - www.pcusa.org/gapjc/decisions/pjc21812withconcurrences.pdf - of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly, the church's highest court, was released April 29. It found that Spahr, who conducted two same-gender marriages in 2004 and 2005, could not be "found guilty of doing that which, by definition, cannot be done." This complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08335.htm.



18. BLOG FEATURES VOTING PATTERNS OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS: This week the PBS Religion & Ethics Newsweekly blog, "One Nation: Religion & Politics 2008," features the latest survey results on religious voting patterns in the Indiana and North Carolina Democratic primaries. The blog can be found at www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/blog/2008/05/religious-voters-and-election-2.html.