



SEPTEMBER 2007

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1. FALL SYNOD MEETING BEGINS SEPT. 30 AT MT. OLIVET CENTER: The fall meeting of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies opens Sunday evening, Sept. 30, at the Mt. Olivet Conference & Retreat Center in Farmington, Minn. The meeting runs Sunday through Tuesday. In his invitation letter, the Rev. Phil Brown, synod executive, quoted a portion of Martha Whitmore Hickman's "Healing After Loss." She wrote, "In contemplative silence we can sense communion with all people, and with trees, flowers, wind, sky." The complete invitation letter can be found at www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/Oct%202007%20memo.pdf.

2. PDA RESPONDS TO FLOODING IN SYNOD'S PRESBYTERIES: Presbyterian Disaster Assistance continues to respond to extensive flooding throughout the central United States, including multiple presbyteries in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. From March through the present, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has provided \$245,000 in One Great Hour of Sharing and designated funds to 20 separate presbyteries that have been affected by storms and flooding. In addition, 27 members of the PDA National Response Team have worked with the affected presbyteries, serving as resources, providing assistance in the relief and recovery efforts, and representing the care and concern of the whole church. Items and other resources are still needed in response to flooding the John Knox Presbytery. Current information, updated Sept. 20, can be found at www.jknox.org/itemsneeded.doc.

3. SYNOD-WIDE PARISH NURSE DIRECTORY INITIATED: Marcia Heyser is a parish nurse and she's attempting to assemble a synod-wide directory of parish nurses. According to Heyser, the directory would enable parish nurses to stay in touch, share experiences and pass on information. She has attempted to gather information from each of the presbyteries within the synod, but the process has been slow the information slim. While information on the Web site of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) concerning parish nursing is valuable -- <http://www.pcusa.org/nationalhealth/parishnursing/index.htm>, Heyser said, a synod-wide directory would be an equally valuable resource. To obtain information about the directory, which currently contains 29 names, Heyser can be contacted at Mbheyser1@aol.com.

4. IOWA CHURCH OPERATES 'PRESBYTERIAN COOKIE PROJECT': Bonnie Loomis, clerk of session of First Presbyterian Church of Greene, Iowa, is also known as the "Crazy Cookie Lady." Loomis is the most active supporter of the church's Presbyterian Cookie Project, selling a cookie press of the seal of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Loomis actively sends out brochures, makes phone calls and continues to seek ways to promote the project. The "Crazy Cookie Lady" is a moniker given to her by her church and, according to Loomis, the nickname is soon to find its way to a T-shirt. The cookie press, authorized by the denomination, is ceramic and the face of the press is terra cotta. The price of the press is \$10, including shipping and handling, and it comes with a cookie recipe. All proceeds, after costs, are provided to mission projects chosen by the session of First Presbyterian Church of Greene. Loomis can be contacted by email at itchyft_5063@yahoo.com. The church can be contacted by writing First Presbyterian Church of Greene, Box 160, Greene, IA 50636, or by email at pcgreene@omnitelcom.com.

5. EAST IOWA CHURCH HAS PIE-MAKING MINISTRY: East Iowa Presbytery's Monticello First Presbyterian Church began a pie-making ministry after ordering more souvenirs than they could sell for the church's 100th anniversary celebration 25 years ago. A church member came up with the idea of selling pies to pay the souvenir bill. The pies were such a hit that once the bill was paid off, they continued selling pies to help support the church's ministry. How many pies do they make in a day? Recently they made 125 pies

for the state fair by starting at 6 a.m. and finishing at 3 p.m. On any given "Pie Day" they have about 15 women (and men) at work. In all, they make 33 different kinds - the best-seller is triple berry (blueberry, blackberry and red raspberry) ... it's berry good.

6. DES MOINES PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN TAKE PART IN PALM PROJECT:

Presbyterian Women of Des Moines Presbytery has set a goal for each of its churches Presbyterian Women groups to contribute a minimum of \$20 to purchase palm plants for the national palm Project. Twenty dollars purchases 10 plants. The national project is supporting the development of palm plantations in the Congo, where war-related agricultural destruction has turned the country from a cooking oil-exporting country into an oil-importing one. The palm-planting project is being coordinated with the Presbyterian Community of the Congo.

7. HUNGER PROGRAM MAKES AWARDS; 1 RECIPIENT IN IOWA:

The Presbyterian Hunger Program has awarded grants totaling \$196,300 to 26 organizations around the country working to alleviate hunger by creating a more just and healthier food system. Funding for the grants, which represents a portion of awards given each year by PHP, comes from the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. The grants will help support projects that focus on such issues as food accessibility for low-income families, justice for farm workers, strengthening local food economies, sustainable development, community organizing, and education and advocacy around food issues. The National Catholic Rural Life Conference in Des Moines, Iowa, received \$7,000 to support advocacy efforts regarding neglected social justice and corporate responsibility sections of the Farm Bill. The full story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07539.htm.

8. BUTLER BASS TO SPEAK AT UNITED SEMINARY, PRESBYFEST:

Diana Butler Bass, an expert in American religion who works as an author, speaker and independent scholar, will address the way some churches have created growing congregations in the current climate of change when she speaks in Bigelow Chapel of United Theological Seminary in New Brighton, Minn., Friday, Sept. 28, at 7 p.m. Bass will identify the need for structural and spiritual changes, issues surrounding tradition, and the practices that make for congregational renewal. Bass, who holds a doctorate in religious studies from Duke University, is the author of six books on American religious practice. Her best-selling book, "The Practicing Congregation: Imagining a New Old Church," has been lauded as one of the most important books on mainline Protestantism in the last two decades. This event is co-sponsored by Presbyfest 2007, an event of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area, where Bass will lead workshops Saturday, Sept. 29, at North Como Presbyterian Church in Roseville, Minn. Registration information concerning the presentation at United Theological Seminary can be found at <http://www.unitedseminary-mn.org/ce/index.asp#butlerbass>. More information about Presbyfest can be found at <http://www.ptcaweb.org/Presbyfest2007.htm>.

9. WINTER PASTORS SCHOOL SET IN JANUARY AT HASTINGS COLLEGE:

The Rev. Victor Hunter, pastor of Evergreen Christian Church and retreat director at A Mountain Retreat, both in Evergreen, Colo., will lead Winter Pastors School at Hastings College in Hastings, Neb., Jan. 28-31. The theme will be "Vital Vocations and Communities: Survival or Revival in Pastoral Ministry in the Postmodern World." The cost is \$95, which covers the event, hotel lodging and all meals. Spouses are welcome for an additional \$50. Additional information and registration materials can be obtained by contacting Lowell Knauss, executive presbyter of the Homestead Presbytery, at 402.474.0612 or by email at lowellk@homesteadpres.org.

10. PRES HOUSE AT UW-MADISON MAKES GOOD NEWS AGAIN: Channel 3 News in Madison, a CBS affiliate, ran a piece about the new Pres House residence in late August. The story is still up on the Web at www.c3ktogo.com/news-video/?mgid=11537. According to a note from the folks at Pres House, the news program "took some nice video footage of the building and captured the feel of the place quite well."

11. PLANS UNDER WAY TO CELEBRATE WESTMINSTER WOODS MINISTRY: In preparation for celebrating the ministry at Westminster Woods Camp in the Presbytery of Central Nebraska, photographs are being sought that could be used to create a picture montage of that history. Those willing to share pictures should send them to the Rev. Bill Nottage-Tacey in care of First Presbyterian Church, 621 N. Lincoln, Hastings, NE 68901. The deadline for receiving pictures is Nov. 1. The Presbytery of Central Nebraska discontinued its camp and conference ministry at Westminster Woods. A Westminster Woods auction is slated Oct. 20.

12. NATIONAL ELDERS CONFERENCE DRAWS 300 ATTENDEES: "We want to create a bunch of dangerous elders, elders who know what the ministry of being an elder is about and want to claim that ministry for their own," Gradye Parsons told the first-ever National Elders Conference before its first plenary session. During the August conference, attended by more than 300 elders from almost every state in the nation, speaker after speaker and workshop leader after preacher worked together to bring about Parsons' goal. The complete wrap-up story can be found at www.pcusa.org/eldersconference. Several other stories and Web locations are "Dangerous Elders" at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07536.htm; "Guide to Go" at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07536.htm; "Good Bible Teaching Creates Space to Hear Truth" at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07542.htm; "Dangerous Truth" at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07543.htm; "Sacred Duty" at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07545.htm; and "Taking it to the Streets" at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07550.htm.

13. NATIONAL CONFERENCE PROVES A WITNESS FOR EVANGELISM: The National Presbyterian Evangelism Conference, held in Nashville over the Labor Day weekend, DREW 500 Presbyterians. There were almost 60 workshops at the conference, and there was worship on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. Video clips and several workshops are available online at www.pcusa.org/evangelism. Several other stories and Web locations are "Spiritual Revival is Key to Social Transformation" at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07548.htm; "Shaking Comfort Zones and a Few Hands" at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07552.htm; "Enjoying the Ride" at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07551.htm; and "Kansas City Congregation Transformed by Hispanic Outreach" at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07558.htm.

14. GAC, MGB EXECS HEAR MESSAGE OF 'CHURCH AS FAMILY:' God's vision for the church is that it act more like a family, the Rev. Tom Taylor told a joint gathering of middle governing body executives and the General Assembly Council Sept. 19. Preaching at the closing worship service of the second annual gathering, Taylor, the GAC's deputy executive director for mission, said that God's expectation in Acts 2 is "that people were not just to be doing stuff together but were called to be a community. God would love it we would act more like a family." The rest of the story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07593.htm. Other stories from the joint meeting and Web locations are "Consensus Sought on Communication Strategy" at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07592.htm; "Church Leaders Say Dramatic Changes Coming" at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07591.htm; and "Mission Funding Task Force Outlines Final Report" at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07596.htm.

15. GAC TAKES STEPS TO CREATE SEPARATE PDA CORPORATION: Acknowledging the need to adapt to new patterns of charitable giving in the U.S., the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s General Assembly Council has voted to separately incorporate Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA). A "very limited, related and dependent" PDA corporation will be able to accept employer matching funds for employee gifts, as well as government and foundation grants, many of which are currently not available to church agencies. Find the complete story at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07601.htm.

16. FOG TASK FORCE HAS DOCUMENTS READY FOR DISCUSSION: The Form of Government Task Force, established by the 217TH General Assembly in 2006 and charged with presenting a proposed revision to the church's Form of Government has two documents ready for discussion, study and comment by sessions, presbyteries and synods. One document, The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity can be found at www.pcusa.org/formofgovernment/foundations.htm. The second document, Form of Government, can be found at www.pcusa.org/formofgovernment/form-of-government.htm. For additional background, check out the full section related to the form of government at www.pcusa.org/formofgovernment.

17. NEW PC(USA) STAFF TRANSFORM EVANGELISM, MISSION EFFORTS: New staff people are bringing about change in the way the Presbyterian Church (USA) carries out its ministries in evangelism and world mission. Tom Taylor, deputy executive director for mission, Eric Hoey, director of evangelism and church growth, and Hunter Farrell, director of World Mission, outlined their new approach to the Evangelism and Witness Goal Area Committee of the General Assembly Council meeting here Sept. 20. Taylor wants to develop a culture of evangelism and mission in the whole denomination. Outlining the scope of the work of Evangelism and Witness, he said, "Every one of our four goal areas is a lens through which each of the mission areas sees the world." The complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07599.htm.

18. KIRKPATRICK WON'T SEEK FOURTH TERM AS STATED CLERK: The Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick, stated clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), announced Sept. 10 that he has decided not to seek another term as stated clerk. Kirkpatrick's current term will conclude at the end of the 218th General Assembly (2008) in San Jose, Calif., next June. "Serving as Stated Clerk has offered me a platform I would never have dreamed possible-to serve the church I love and to give expression to my passions, my sense of call, and my gifts for the things that really matter," said Kirkpatrick in a written statement. The full story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07568.htm.

19. BOARD OF PENSIONS APPROVES TO TWO NEW PILOT PROGRAMS: The Board of Directors has approved two new pilot grant programs: "Transition-to-College Assistance Grant" and the "Sabbath Sabbatical Support Grant." "Transition-to-College Grants" are designed to help families deal with unanticipated costs when their children head off to college for the first time. Applications are now available online at www.pensions.org. "Sabbath Sabbatical Grants" will begin in January 2008. "Sabbath Sabbatical Support Grants" of up to \$3,000 will be available to help pastors in congregations with fewer than 200 members. More details on how to apply will be available this fall.

20. BOARD OF PENSIONS PLANS EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS: The Board of Pensions has slated "Growing into Tomorrow ... Today" workshops Oct. 9-10 at Southern Illinois Presbytery at Mattoon, Ill.; Feb. 13-14 at Heartland Center, Parkville, Mo.; and March 25-27 at McCormick Seminary, Chicago, Ill. This is a pre-retirement workshop. Up-to-

the-minute listings of workshops can be found at www.pensions.org, then clicking on "education" and selecting the desired workshop.

21. BOARD OF PENSIONS REP URGES CHECKING OF PERSONAL DATA: The "Personal Data Validation Response Sheet," ENR-109, was included in participants' recent "Annual Statement of Benefits Report." The Rev. Douglas Kelly, regional representative for the Board of Pensions, urged participants to check the information the "Annual Statement of Benefits" to make sure the data is correct. Kelly asked participants, if the form is not correct, to fill in the response sheet and return it to "Member Services" at the Board of Pensions. "This is really, really important for you and your family," Kelly wrote.

22. BOARD OF PENSIONS REGIONAL REP CONTACT INFO LISTED: The regional representative of the Board of Pensions, the Rev. Douglas Kelly, is available to consult with local church sessions, personnel committees and employees regarding the benefits plan. "I can help a congregation explore its options for providing benefits for its lay employees," Kelly wrote. He asked congregations to contact him whenever COM, COPM, or Church Treasurers groups need additional information about the benefits plan or an overview. Possible topics include matters such as transitions in ministry, including first call, new call or severance package; effective salary, including why it is vital to keep current in reporting; seminary student medical benefits and seminary debt. The Rev. Kelly can be contacted by mail at 5559 NW Barry Road, Suite 363, Kansas City, MO 64154; by phone at 800.773.7752 (ext. 7045) or 800.511.0132; by fax at 816.431.6117; or by email at dkelly@pensions.org.

23. PRESBYTEL ANSWERS QUESTIONS ONLINE: PresbyTel, a storehouse of knowledge for almost anything related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), answers questions online at www.pcusa.org/presbytel/askus.htm. The church "Reference Desk" can help you find a particular minister, locate a baptismal record, track down church history and give you quick answers to dozens of questions. Many questions are answered within 24 to 48 hours. If you need quicker, personalized service, you may contact one of PresbyTel's consultants at 800.872.3283, between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

24. PRESBYTERIAN 101 WEB SITE OFFERS QUICK FACT GUIDE: For what is distinctive about Presbyterian Church, check out www.pcusa.org/101/101-distinct.htm. For history about Presbyterians, check out www.pcusa.org/101/101-history.htm. And to learn where Presbyterians stand on social issues, check out www.pcusa.org/101/101-social.htm. And for more information about Presbyterians, scan through the entire 101 Web site – www.pcusa.org/101/.