



Keeping in Touch

An e-newsletter for ministry partners in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies

NOVEMBER 23, 2009

The synod can be found online at www.lakesandprairies.org. Also check out the Presbyterian Neighborhood at <http://lakesprairies.pnews.org>.

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PRESBYTERY
OF EAST IOWA



1. EAST IOWA PRESBYTERY OFFERS ALTERNATIVE GIFT IDEA:

The Nov. 12 edition of "[Out and About](#)," the newsletter of the Presbytery of East Iowa, asked readers to

consider an alternative Christmas gift to support flood recovery. The newsletter noted, "You can be a part of helping people reclaim their lives. Money donated to the presbytery to help with flood relief has been used to assist many flood survivors. One family's livelihood as electricians was restored using the gifts given to the Presbytery. They were able to purchase tools that had been lost in the flood to regain their trade and to support their family. Countless other families have been helped." The newsletter article also contains more examples of how contributions have helped other families in the flood-ravaged area. ([Return to top](#))

2. HOSKINS REFLECTS ON DISASTER RECOVERY EFFORTS:

Kaylene Hoskins, disaster assistance coordinator in the Presbytery of North Central Iowa, reflected on her work in that capacity in the fall issue of "Contact," a newsletter of the presbytery. She wrote, "As I reflect on acting as the presbytery's disaster assistance coordinator, I am almost overwhelmed by what I saw those first few days on the job and what I see now. ... I am so grateful for having this opportunity. ... I know I have met angels." Her column can be found on page 11 of "[Contact](#)." ([Return to top](#))



3. SPACE STILL AVAILABLE FOR NORTH CENTRAL IOWA TRIP TO TEXAS:

The Presbytery of North Central Iowa is sponsoring a Mission Trip to Galveston, Texas, in January where there is still

much work to be done in the wake of Hurricane Ike. A recent presbytery newsletter noted, "To those of you who have travelled to Pearlinton and New Orleans on our prior presbytery mission trips, it's time to take our mission work to another place of need ... To those of you who have thought about going the next time, the time to sign up is now." For those unable to participate in person, gift cards for Lowe's and The Home Depot will be accepted. The

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newsletter added, "We have a few more spaces available for the trip. Plan now with your church or with your mission group within the church to make this commitment to join others around the presbytery to make a difference in Galveston." Those interested in making the trip should contact Vicki Thordsen in the presbytery office at vthordsen@presbynciowa.org or by calling 800.383.3617 or 319.233.1747. ([Return to top](#))



4. 'HAVE YOU HEARD ANY GOOD NEWS LATELY?' The Rev. Steve Minnema, interim executive presbyter of the Presbytery of Northern Plains, writing in the November edition of "Light of the Northern Plains," a newsletter of the presbytery, noted, "It has often seemed to me that small doses of bad news, over an extended period of time, have a great power, perhaps because we are not fully aware of their incremental impact on us, to poison our outlook on life. If what you see or hear or learn about daily through the media confronts you with all the bad things that can and do happen and the frequency with which we are helpless before them, sooner or later you might just find yourself sinking into despondency or cynicism." The complete column can be found at "[Light of the Northern Plains.](#)" ([Return to top](#))

5. NEW MEN'S GROUP LEAVES ITS MARK IN GOLDFIELD, IOWA: The fall issue of "Contact," a newsletter of the Presbytery of North Central Iowa, contained an article of an active men's group in Goldfield, Iowa. The article stated, "There is a group of men, right now mostly from Goldfield, that meets at the United Presbyterian Church in Goldfield. They ... enjoy coffee and rolls and a time of fellowship. ... Their goal is to serve Jesus Christ in their community. So far, the group has cleaned out the church basement and taken a load of good used windows and doors to Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Their latest project, the biggest undertaken by the group so far, was a makeover to Renee Simons' house in Goldfield." The complete story can be found on page 10 of "[Contact.](#)" ([Return to top](#))



6. COOK RECOGNIZED FOR EDITING MRV NEWSLETTER: The Presbytery of Missouri River Valley expressed appreciation to the Rev. J. Keith Cook (at left in photo) for editing

"Monday Morning in the Presbytery," the presbytery's newsletter, for the past three years. The recognition took place at the Nov. 10 presbytery meeting. The newsletter's note about the event stated, "It was a complete surprise to Keith. (The Rev. Kevin Keaton

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And just 1 more

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(at right in photo), executive presbyter) sneakily and cleverly got Keith to the chancel to conduct the acknowledgement." Cook is relinquishing the editor's role at the end of 2009. ([Return to top](#))

7. WINNEBAGO PRESBYTERY SUPPORTS

'PRESBYTERY CAMP:' An article in the Nov. 13 edition of "News & Notes," the newsletter of Winnebago Presbytery, stated, "Two weeks ago 50 kids and 20 adults spent four days at the Lion's Camp in Rosholt, Wis., for this year's Presbytery Camp themed 'Telling the Story.' Andy Irwin, a nationally recognized storyteller and musician, was the keynote speaker. Campers participated in a Habitat shed build, small group learning, arts and crafts, and our very own Amazing Race. It was a fabulous event." While campers cover the cost of their lodging and food, the presbytery covers program costs. ([Return to top](#))

8. PRESBYTERIAN OKOBOJI CAMP SEEKS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

The Presbyterian Camp on Lake Okoboji, Milford, Iowa, is currently seeking an executive director for the camp and retreat center. The camp is located in northwest Iowa, off 600 feet of beachfront, along the shores of Lake Okoboji. Additional details of the call to the position can be found at "[Presby Camp](#) ." ([Return to top](#))

9. COLLEGIATE MINISTRY REQUIRES MISSION VIEW:

Campus ministry should be approached like the mission field, be carried out with passion and have a mission. And if the directive sounds simple, it's not. However, it is the message of Benson Hines (at right), who has visited more than 200 campus ministries and more than 300 college ministers since 2007.

The complete story can be found at "[Hines](#) ." ([Return to top](#))





10. COLLEGE MINISTRY SHOULD ADDRESS 'HOOKUP

CULTURE:' The topic of sex may be popular among students on college campuses, but it isn't necessarily a topic found in collegiate ministry settings. But the Rev. Heather Godsey (at left) believes the topics of sex, sexuality and spirituality need to be a part of collegiate ministry. Godsey spoke in Cedar Falls, Iowa, Nov. 10 at the Synod of Lakes and Prairies' second Collegiate Ministries Conference, "Making Connections in Times of Change." The complete story can be found at "[Godsey.](#)" ([Return to top](#))

11. SPIRITUAL COMPONENT IS WORK IN PROGRESS AT PRES HOUSE: The Wisconsin State Journal, Madison, recently published an article about Pres House, the campus ministry and residence hall located on the University of Wisconsin campus. The article began: " Before choosing the career path he's on today, Jonathan Reid, a doctoral student in history at UW-Madison, considered attending seminary. Many aspects of a religious life still appeal to him, including living among others of faith. So for his campus residence, he chose Pres House, a 51-unit apartment building opened in 2007 by the Presbyterian student ministry on campus." The complete story can be found in the [Wisconsin State Journal.](#) ([Return to top](#))

12. COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED TO FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS: The [National Presbyterian College Scholarship Program](#), administered through [Financial Aid for Studies](#), a ministry of the [Office of Vocation](#), offers need-based scholarship assistance to full-time students entering their first year of college at one of the [participating colleges](#) related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Applicants must be confirmed members of the PC(USA) and carry a 3.0 cumulative high school grade point average. Applications for the 2010-11 academic year are due Jan. 31. ([Return to top](#))

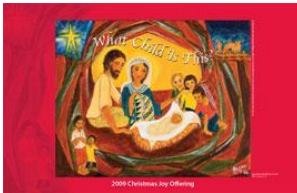
13. FTE OFFERS FELLOWSHIPS FOR 2010-11 ACADEMIC YEAR: The Fund for Theological Education has announced that it will provide \$1.5 million for the 2010-11 academic year to theological students across the United States and Canada who aspire to be pastoral leaders and professors. The fellowships support students who are preparing for pastoral ministry and doctoral students from underrepresented racial ethnic groups who plan to teach religion, theology or biblical studies. The complete story can be found at "[FTE Fellowships.](#)" ([Return to top](#))

14. THEOLOGICAL EDUCATORS GRAPPLE WITH LEADERSHIP NEEDS: More than 100 leaders of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) theological education institutions gathered on the campus of San Francisco Theological Seminary Nov. 16 to discuss emerging leadership needs in the church and how seminaries might concentrate dwindling resources to meet those needs. The "fishbowl" exercise (four participants providing initial comments with others responding) took place during the semi-annual meeting of the PC(USA)'s Committee on Theological Education as part of the ongoing work of the Joint Committee on Leadership Needs, sponsored by the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Mission Council. The complete story can be found at "[Theological Educators.](#)" ([Return to top](#))



15. STEWARDSHIP CONFERENCES SET IN MARCH, APRIL: Two stewardship events are scheduled for spring 2010 in Indianapolis, Ind. The [Stewardship Kaleidoscope Conference](#), is slated March 15-17 and will include numerous workshops on congregational stewardship. The other conference, the [North American Conference on Christian Philanthropy](#), runs April 14-16. Speakers will include John Wimmer of the Lilly Endowment and Una Olisi, director of research from the

16. PTS SETS MULTICULTURAL MINISTRY INSTITUTE, KIM ONE OF LEADERS: The Erdman Center, Princeton Theological Seminary's Center of Continuing Education, in collaboration with The Hispanic Leadership Program, has slated the Institute for Multicultural Ministry Monday through Friday, Jan. 11-15. The Rev. Jin Kim, pastor of [Church of All Nations](#) in Columbia Heights, Minn., will be one of the institute's leaders. Promotional material for the institute states, " In a post-modern, post-ideological, post-denominational, multicultural age often marked by uprootedness and loss of meaning, how do we "do church" in a way that testifies to the reconciling gospel of Jesus Christ? In an individualistic culture that tends toward alienation and isolation, how do we lead our congregations to become high-risk, low-anxiety churches, to lead God's people to confess who they are, to experience healing in intimate community, and to be a witness to the liberating power of the Spirit?" Details are available at the Institute for [Multicultural Ministry](#). ([Return to top](#))



17. CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING CELEBRATES GOD'S LOVE: Presbyterians have long given an offering at Christmas in celebration of God's love shown in the gift of Jesus. Half of the offering supports students at the church's historic racial ethnic schools who are listening for God's call, and the other half helps the Board of Pensions' assistance programs meet unexpected financial needs of those who have spent their lives following that call. A new video, "What Child Is This," highlights this year's theme. The video and other free resources can be found at "[Christmas Joy](#)." ([Return to top](#))



18. YOUTH TRIENNIUM TAKES PLACE NEXT SUMMER: Every three years the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Cumberland Presbyterian Church and Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America gather thousands of Presbyterian youth and adult youth leaders together for worship, play, music, community building, and Bible study. This is known as the [Presbyterian Youth Triennium](#) or PYT, and next summer it runs July 20-24 at Purdue University in Indiana. The Triennium is for young people entering or completed high school (approximately ages 14-19 years old by July 20, 2010). Adult Advisors must be 21 years of age by this date. A work crew track is available for college-aged young people who would like to apply to attend and volunteer to work behind the scenes. ([Return to top](#))

19. WASHINGTON OFFICE HELPS PASTOR PRESS EL SALVADOR MURDER CASE: When 10 members of his congregation were confronted in El Salvador with the disappearance and subsequent death of a Salvadoran mission colleague, the Rev. Andrew Foster Connors had a new appreciation of what the Church "with a capital 'C'" was all about. Marcelo Rivera, a Salvadoran community leader and environmental activist, disappeared near his hometown of San Isidro, El Salvador, on June 19, while a visiting delegation including members from the Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church in Baltimore was expecting to meet with him. Across the miles that separated them, the delegation sent a fervent plea to their pastor as they sought to cope with the shocking impact and the broader implications of Rivera's disappearance. The complete story can be found at "[Washington Office](#)." ([Return to top](#))

20. 'MISSION CROSSROADS' OFFERS IDEAS, RESOURCES, COORDINATION: Mission Crossroads, "a Web-based wisdom community for Presbyterians passionate about mission," is growing in membership and content, according to Lis Valle, the site's creator. "More than 750 people have joined since we launched the site last April," said Valle, Presbyterian World Mission's associate director for equipping the church for mission involvement. "It's a place to share ideas about mission, coordinate efforts and form groups around particular interests." The site contains links to online resources as well as information about books

and other print publications. Mission trip leaders, mission committee chairs, mission network members, mission personnel, World Mission staff, and members and leaders of various Presbyterian-related mission groups are among those who have joined Mission Crossroads. The complete story can be found at "[Mission Crossroads](#)." ([Return to top](#))

21. HOMELESS FIND COMMUNITY AT LAS VEGAS CHURCH: Six years ago, Ron Waters, a former altar boy, was homeless. He lived in the bushes outside Westminster Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas. "I didn't want society anymore," he said. "I was grubby, an outcast." He bathed with a garden hose when no one was around. But from his vantage point he could see the church people coming and going. "They were happy, smiling, even giggling. Those were the kind of things I wanted in my life," he said. The complete story of outreach and evangelism ministry can be found at "[Homeless](#)." ([Return to top](#))

22. SENIOR PRESBYTERIAN CHAPLAIN ADDRESSES FORT HOOD TRAGEDY: A top-ranking retired Presbyterian military chaplain wrote earlier this month to the head of the Presbyterian Council on Chaplains and Military Personnel in the wake of the horrific mass killings at Fort Hood, Texas, rejecting "the natural and immediate response of retribution." Instead, said Brigadier General (Ret.) Wayne H. Hoffman in his letter to PCCMP director, the Rev. Ed Brogan, "the challenge is to respond as shepherds of a flock that has been raided, wounded, and some of them killed." The complete story can be found at "[Fort Hood](#)." ([Return to top](#))

23. LISA LARGES IS APPROVED FOR ORDINATION: Lisa Larges was approved Nov. 10 for ordination to minister of the word and sacrament by the Presbytery of San Francisco. She has accepted a call to serve in a validated ministry as minister coordinator of That All May Freely Serve, an organization that works for the full inclusion of all members in the life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The vote to approve Larges' ordination was 156-138. The complete story can be found at "[Ordination](#)." ([Return to top](#))



24. TOM TAYLOR TO HEAD PRESBYTERIAN FOUNDATION: A familiar face within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is leaving the denomination's General Assembly Mission Council to lead one of its sister agencies, the Presbyterian Foundation. The Rev. Tom Taylor, executive deputy director for mission in the GAMC, will begin his new post as president and chief executive officer at the foundation, based in Jeffersonville, Ind., Jan. 15. The complete story can be found at "[Foundation](#)." ([Return to top](#))



25. MODERATOR'S COLUMN SPEAKS OF LIFE, THANKFULNESS: For November the column of the moderator of the 218th General Assembly was written by the vice moderator, the Rev. Byron Wade. He opened, "For the past sixteen months, I have had the pleasure of serving as vice-moderator of the 218th (2008) General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It is a great honor and privilege to listen, learn and witness the great things our church is doing to uphold the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ." The complete column can be found at "[Moderator's Column](#)." ([Return to top](#))

26. NCC/CWS ASSEMBLY TOLD BIBLICAL PRACTICES DEFY WORLD'S WISDOM: Choosing 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 ("Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances") as the theme for the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and Church World Service 2009 General Assembly is "utterly absurd, patently illogical and Pollyanna-ish," Presbyterian theologian Margaret Aymer told the ecumenical group's opening plenary in Minneapolis Nov. 10. "Common sense would say, in the face of the world today, rejoicing is naïve," Aymer, professor of New Testament at the Interdenominational Theological Center, which includes PC(USA)-related Johnson C. Smith Seminary, told the 300 delegates from 28 of the NCC's 35 member-churches gathered for the annual assembly. The complete story can be found at "[Assembly](#)." ([Return to top](#))

27. WRITERS GUILD SLATES 2010 CONFERENCE, SEEKS AWARD NOMINEES: The

Presbyterian Writers Guild announced that the 2010 Presbyterian Writers Conference will be held April 28-29 at the [Scarritt-Bennett Center](#) in Nashville, Tenn. The conference will feature Presbyterian author Cecil Murphey. Registration information will be available soon. The Writers Guild is also seeking nominations for its 2010-2011 David Steele Distinguished Writer Award, which is given biennially to recognize the cumulative work and influence, regardless of genre or subject matter, of a Presbyterian writer. The award will be presented at the organization's luncheon at the 219th General Assembly in July in Minneapolis. [Nominations](#) are due Jan. 15. The [Presbyterian Writers Guild](#) is a support network of and for Presbyterians who write as a form of Christian ministry. Any Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) writer may belong to the Guild. ([Return to top](#))



28. PRESBYTERIANS TODAY SEEKS SPORTS CONTACTS FOR STORY:

[Presbyterians Today](#), a magazine of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), is seeking names and contact information of Presbyterians whose vocation is sports, either as professional athletes or those who coach at professional or college levels. The information is for a Presbyterians Today feature planned for next spring. The contact is John Sniffen, associate editor, Presbyterians Today, at john.sniffen@pcusa.org or by calling 888.728.7228, extension 5634. ([Return to top](#))

29. PEW RESEARCH POLL: FAITH-BASED PROGRAMS STILL POPULAR: A new report based on a recent national survey by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life and the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press finds that more than eight years after former President George W. Bush unveiled his faith-based initiative, the policy continues to draw broad public support. At the same time, many Americans express concerns about blurring the lines between church and state, as was the case when Bush first announced the initiative. The survey, conducted Aug. 11-27 among 4,013 adults, finds that 69 percent of Americans say they favor allowing churches and other houses of worship, along with other organizations, to apply for government funding to provide social services such as job training or drug treatment counseling, while just 25 percent oppose this approach. The study can be found on the [Pew website](#). ([Return to top](#))



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