



EMerge

A Publication of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area

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December 19, 2008

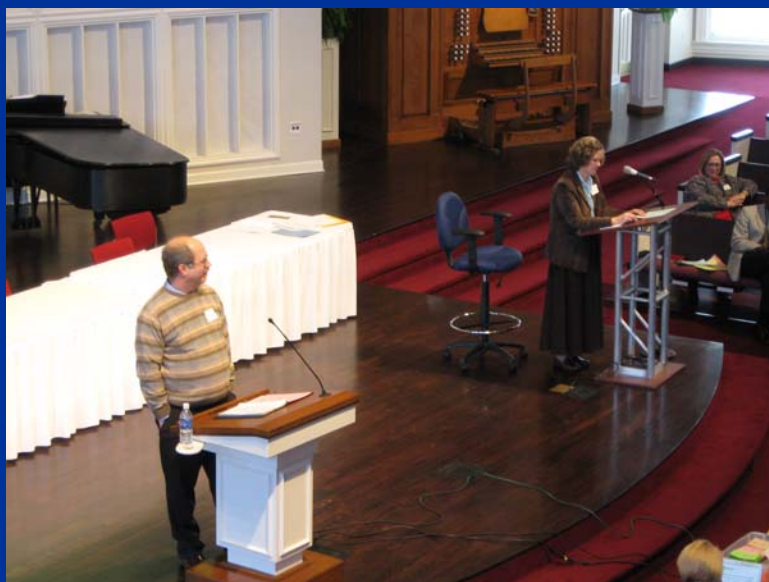


2008 in PTCA Marked by Changes, Controversy and Crisis

By Dennis Sanders, IT/Communications Specialist
Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area

As 2008 comes to a close, it is important to note some of the notable events that took place in the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area as well as in the wider Presbyterian Church (USA).

Paul Capetz Restored to Office



Moderator Ward Sessing looks on as Moderator-Elect Joan Simser speaks at the January 26, 2008 special meeting at Christ Presbyterian Church in Edina.

The year started out with an issue that has caused rifts among the Presbyterian family not just here, but across the denomination. Paul Capetz, an openly gay man, asked to have his ordination restored. Capetz, who is a professor at United Theological Seminary in New Brighton, MN, was ordained by the Presbytery of Chicago in 1992, but set aside his ordination in 2000 to protest the 1997 addition of G-6.0106b to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Book of Order. According to an article by the Presbyterian News Service, this amendment "requires ordained church officers to practice 'fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and woman or chastity in singleness.'" Capetz was asking for his ordination to be restored in light of the 2006 General Assembly's authoritative interpretation of The Book of Order section G-6.0108 that allows candidates

to raise principled objections or a "scruple" and affirms the presbytery's role to determine fitness of candidates.

A special meeting of the Presbytery was held in late January at Christ Presbyterian in Edina. After a day-long meeting, the Presbytery voted 197 to 84 that Capetz declared departure from ordination standards regarding sexual practice did not constitute a failure to adhere to the essentials of reformed faith and polity and 196 to 79 to restore Capetz to the exercise of the ordained office of minister of word and sacrament.

The results of the special meeting had several ramifications. On February 11, the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission ruled that there are no exceptions to the ordination standards outlined in the Book of Order. In March, a remedial claim was filed against the Presbytery. Among those named in the claim were The Rev. David Bierschwale, pastor of Presbyterian Church of the Master in Coon Rapids; The Rev. David Lenz, pastor of Hope Presbyterian in Richfield; and Elder Carol Shan-

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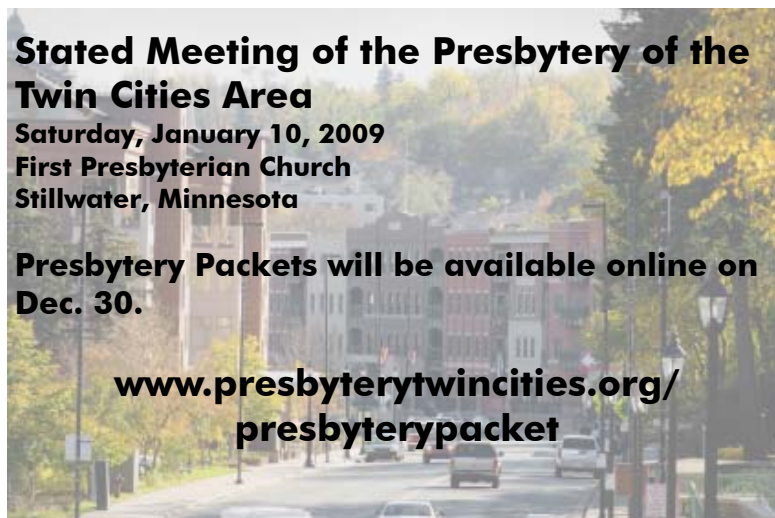
Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area

Saturday, January 10, 2009

**First Presbyterian Church
Stillwater, Minnesota**

**Presbytery Packets will be available online on
Dec. 30.**

**[www.presbyterytwincities.org/
presbyterypacket](http://www.presbyterytwincities.org/presbyterypacket)**



2008, Continued

holtzer, a member of Faith Presbyterian in Minnetonka. The complaint was that the actions that took place in January were "irregular" because the PTCA declared behavioral requirements of G-6.0106b is non-essential and that because they restored someone who will not follow G-6.0106b. The claim was dismissed by the Synod Permanent Judicial Commission and has been appealed to the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission, which will hear the case in February of 2009.

The Year of Three Executive Presbyters

2008 saw a lot of change in the position of Executive Presbyter when three people held the post during the calendar year. Interim Executive Presbyter Sarai Schnucker Rice ended her time in February after serving in the post since September of 2006. In a brief note to the PTCA she commented on her time in the role. "The 18 months that I've been here have been some of the most exciting

and challenging times in my life," Schuckner Rice noted. "I've discovered so many things that I didn't know I knew, and together we've been able to do so many things that we didn't know we could do."

Rev. Schnucker Rice is currently the Executive Director of the Des Moines Area Religious Council.

During the same month, Robert Cuthill started his eight-month tenure as Interim Transitional Executive Presbyter. Rev. Cuthill, an honorably retired pastor, had been Synod Executive of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies from 1979 to 1995 and before that was Executive Presbyter of the Great Rivers Presbytery from 1973 to 1979.

The highlight of his term was a drive to visit with as many pastors in the Presbytery as he could. At the September 9 Stated Meeting, Cuthill reported that as of the meeting he had met 94% of the installed pastors, 36% of the at-large pastors, and 64% of the retired pastors. Cuthill said that in his chats with pastors, it was the rare person that ever brought up the issues, such as the ordination of gays and lesbians that tend to divide the Presbyterian Church (USA). Instead, there was more talk about what ministry can be done. "There is health in our churches, if we listen to it," Cuthill said.

At that same meeting, the Presbytery chose Rev. Chaz Ruark to be the permanent Executive Presbyter. Ruark served as Interim Executive Presbyter in the Missouri River Valley Presbytery for 18 months and before that was in various pastorates in Arkansas and Oklahoma. Ruark began his job on November 1 and was installed into his position at the November 11 Stated Meeting at Knox Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis. In a statement released in early September, Ruark had this to say:

"I am honored to be the nominee for Executive Presbyter for the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area. The transitional nature of our society and church make this a time of unique challenges, but also exciting opportunities. As I look at the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area I see both the resources and desire to meet those challenges and opportunities. The PTCA has a rich tradition of conducting mission as a member of the Reformed family of faith. It is my sincere desire to provide able leadership as together we seek to continue the tradition of past generations in being a church that calls, equips, and empowers its members to be followers of Jesus Christ."

Three EPs



Sarai Schnucker Rice, Robert Cuthill and Chaz Ruark all served as Executive Presbyter in 2008.

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2008, Continued

Presbytery Welcomes New Immigrant Fellowship, Starts Discussions among Racial-Ethnic Pastors

In July, the Presbytery welcomed the Kenyan Christian Fellowship into the Presbytery as an immigrant fellowship. Stated Clerk Nancy Grittman had this to say in her Stated Meeting highlights:

“The main event of the early evening was the welcoming of the Kenyan Presbyterian Fellowship of St. Paul to the Presbytery, and the welcoming to membership their pastor, Michael Ngeru Kamau, from the Presbytery of Nairobi. Several members of the congregation were present to lead some enthusiastic singing and celebration. We welcome this new fellowship!”

Later in the year, a gathering of racial and ethnic pastors meet informally with then-Interim Executive Presbyter Bob Cuthill. The discussions will continue under Executive Presbyter Chaz Ruark.

The Church and the Financial Crisis

In October, EMerge produced a special issue on the Financial Crisis. Articles from Presbyterian News Service as well as local views filled the special issue and subsequent issues of EMerge. Two local pastors, Jamie Schultz and Kara Root, put together a special event on November 11 to talk about the ongoing crisis and how the church can best respond. Look for more reports on the crisis as we head into 2009.

Highlights of GA 218

The 218th General Assembly, held in San Jose, CA was noted for many big events. San Francisco pastor Bruce Reyes-Chow was elected as Moderator. The 39-year-old is well versed in “Web 2.0” and has used such tools as blogs, Facebook and Twitter to connect with fellow Presbyterians.

Another highlight was the passing of an amendment that could, if passed by a majority of the 173 presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church (USA) overturn the so-called “Amendment B.” Stated Clerk, Nancy Grittman, who attended GA, wrote the following:

GA approved by a vote of 380-325, sending a proposed amendment to G-6.0106b to the presbyteries that will delete the current “fidelity and chastity” paragraph and insert new paragraph as follows:

Those who are called to ordained service in the church, by their assent to the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003), pledge themselves to live lives obedient to Jesus Christ the Head of the Church, striving to follow where He leads through the witness of the Scriptures, and to understand the Scriptures through the instruction of the Confessions. In so doing, they declare their fidelity to the standards of the Church. Each governing body charged with examination for ordination and/or installation (G-14.0240 and G-14.0450) establishes the candidate’s sincere efforts to adhere to these standards.”

The Presbytery will take up this and other amendments to the Book of Order during the March 2009 Stated Meeting at Faith Presbyterian in Minnetonka.

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Praise and Thanksgiving



Members of Kenyan Christian Fellowship celebrate as their congregation became an official immigrant fellowship in the PTCA at the July 2008 Stated Meeting in Buffalo, MN.

2008, Continued

Other Events

Other events took place in 2008 that are noteworthy, including:

- Ongoing progress at the New Church Development, Chain of Lakes Presbyterian in Lino Lakes;
- Central Presbyterian in St. Paul offered hospitality to police and protestors alike during the Republican National Convention in St. Paul;
- Faith Presbyterian in Minnetonka and Lake Nokomis Presbyterian in Minneapolis worked together to send clean-up kits to Iowa after devastating floods affected the state;
- Kwanzaa Presbyterian spearheads a sidewalk art project to get HIV prevention messages out to the North Minneapolis community.

No doubt 2009 will present some major challenges. For example, preparations for the 219th General Assembly to be held in Minneapolis in 2010 will ramp up. The economy will have a major effect on churches in the coming year. EMerge will keep you posted as these and other events as things develop.

Holiday Hours at PTCA Office



- December 24-25: PTCA Office Closed
- December 31: PTCA Office Open Until 12:30pm
- January 1: PTCA Office Closed

Regional Rep Review, December 2008: News from the Board of Pensions

**By Doug Kelly
Board of Pensions**

Retirement Savings Plan Adoption Agreements due by December 31

Churches and employing organizations that have employees who participate in the Retirement Savings Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ("the RSP") must submit an Adoption Agreement by December 31, 2008, to continue their participation in the RSP. The agreements will support the Board of Pensions' compliance with the new IRS regulations for Section 403(b) plans, which take effect January 1, 2009.

An Adoption Agreement was mailed to each participating employer at the end of September. Plan sponsors and employers must complete this agreement to ensure compliance with the written plan document requirement of the new regulations. Compliance is required to maintain the tax-qualified status of their 403(b) plans.

If churches or employing organizations have questions about their responsibilities under the new 403(b) plan regulations, they can refer to the Board's Employer Frequently Asked Questions (at the Board of Pensions website).



Doug Kelly is the Board of Pension's Regional Representative for the Synod of Lakes and Prairies (which includes the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area), Synod of Lincoln Trails and Synod of Mid-America. Below is his contact information:

tion:

Phone: 800-773-7752, ext. 7045

Email: dkelly@pensions.org

2009 Dues Schedule available

The [2009 dues schedule](#) is now available. It includes the:

- Medical Plan dues
- Pension Plan dues
- Death and Disability Plan dues
- Seminary student medical dues
- Continuing coverage at termination of eligible service for members with traditional coverage dues
- Affiliated Benefits Program dues
- Options for continuing coverage at termination of eligible service for members with Affiliated Benefits Program coverage dues
- Dental benefits subscription costs
- Supplemental Death Benefits rates

Please see the fall 2008 issue of [The Board Bulletin](#) at www.pensions.org for the highlights of the healthcare dues changes.

New features added to BenefitsConnect and Pensions.org

The Board is continually upgrading its Web site to better serve our members. We are pleased to announce some of the latest enhancements to BenefitsConnect and Pensions.org.

One of the most exciting developments is the availability of BenefitsConnect to retirees and surviving spouses. In addition to listing all of the benefits in which they are currently enrolled, BenefitsConnect provides additional information,

Board of Pensions, continued

including the payment history to these members. Increased functionality includes allowing them to request online a change in their direct deposit information.

The latest addition to the calculators is the Taxation of Death Benefit Dues Calculator, which enables church treasurers and business administrators to determine imputed income, if any, that must be reported on members' W-2 forms for death benefits coverage through the Benefits Plan.

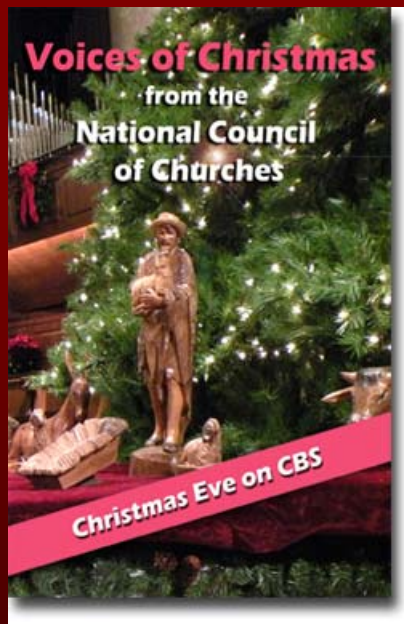
Finally, the Board has added a Frequently Asked Questions section to Pensions.org. This section answers the most common questions the Board receives about medical claims, salary changes, dues invoices, service changes, and dependent changes.

And don't forget to visit Pensions.org regularly for the latest News, Events, and Announcements. Staying informed is the best way to make the most of the plans, programs, and services the Board offers its members, which is an act of Stewardship of Self.

May you and yours have a blessed Advent and a joy filled Christmas season!

NCC's Christmas Eve special previewing on YouTube

LOUISVILLE — A 10-minute preview of "Voices of Christmas from the National Council of Churches," the CBS



Christmas Eve special celebrating the 100th anniversary of the NCC, can be found on YouTube (you can go to the NCC website which links to the YouTube video. Go to www.nccusa.org).

This year's program features clips from previous years' specials, including "The Angels Sing," the 2007 program produced at Norton Presbyterian Church in Darien, CT.

The 10-minute preview includes a segment from "The Angels Sing." The hour-long program will be carried on 190 CBS stations across the country on Christmas eve, in most areas in the same time period "Late Show with David Letterman" is usually scheduled (11:35 pm Eastern/10:35 pm Central).

Check local listings for the exact time it will be aired in your area.

-Jerry Van Marter, Presbyterian News Service

Doug

December Musings from Chain of Lakes NCD

by the Rev. David Liddle
Gathering Pastor, Chain of Lakes NCD

Note: This is another update from David Liddle, the Gathering Pastor for Chain of Lakes Presbyterian New Church Development, a new church start in Lino Lakes, MN. Liddle will be ending his time as gathering pastor in late December and an Organizing Pastor is scheduled to start in mid-February 2009. You can follow the progress of this new ministry by visiting Chain of Lakes website at www.colpres.org or their Chain Link Blog at <http://chainlink-chainoflakesncd.blogspot.com> where the follow update comes from.



The offices of Chain of Lakes Presbyterian Church located in Lino Lakes. Photo by Dennis Sanders.

It's December already...I wonder where the year has gone! It seems like only yesterday that I began my ministry as "gathering pastor," charged with bringing together a community of people to be the core group for a new church in the Protestant/Presbyterian/Reformed tradition in the Chain of Lakes area. Out of thirty prospects, twelve have signed on. That doesn't seem like a lot, but they're an enthusiastic, gifted and congenial bunch, committed to the vision that God is doing a new thing. Also, I seem to recall another group of twelve--mentioned in the Gospels--who went on to do great things! So I have to believe it's enough for God's purposes.

Now that the first (gathering) phase is essentially complete, we begin a planned transition to the next (organizing) phase. I'll be departing this month to make way for the orga-

nizing pastor, who has accepted God's call to lead the new congregation. He'll begin his ministry in mid-February and, together with the core group, begin to bring the vision to reality. Many things will begin to happen in 2009, so that by this time next year, the church will be worshiping God, serving and bearing witness to God's love in the surrounding community, and actually being a community to one another. Despite its Presbyterian origin, we hope the church won't be defined by its denominational identity as much as by its faithfulness to God's call to be an authentic community of servants gathered for worship, nurture, witness and service in the name of Jesus Christ, the great Head of the church.

Starting four weeks before Christmas, the church season of Advent heralds the beginning of the Christian year. In this hemisphere at least, Advent is a time of darkness. The light dawns each day as if with labored reluctance, and the shadows lengthen early as the night encroaches upon the remnants of the day. For Christians, it's always been a time of reflection and preparation, of memory and hope, of promise and wide-eyed expectation. During Advent we look for the One who is to come, knowing full well that he has already come and pitched his tent among us, and that he will come again in glory to make all things new.

That can be a comforting message in these days when darkness seems to triumph over light, not only in the measure of our days but also in the travails of economic uncertainty, environmental degradation, ruthless terrorism, the weariness of war and the hungers for sustenance of human bodies and the human spirit. While faith by itself won't solve our problems, it can offer reassurance, as the church's celebration of Christ's nativity approaches, that "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

It's in this broader cultural, seasonal, social and political context that we make the transition to the next phase of this new church. In some ways it may seem trivial by comparison, but in other ways it can be a powerful witness to the light shining in the darkness, to the importance of a community where we can

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Chain of Lakes, continued

bear one another's burdens and share each other's joys, to God's promise to bring life out of death, and to the reality of God's love for this world and for each one of us.

As I conclude my ministry here, that's my prayer for the core group, for the organizing pastor, for this Chain of Lakes region, and for all whose lives the church will touch in the years ahead. I'm confident that, with God's continued blessing, this new church will join other established churches in the area in a strong and unified witness to the love that God reveals in Jesus Christ. When it does, I will give thanks for having played a small role in helping it to become a reality.

As I've said in previous posts, stay tuned... There's lots more to come!

Grace and Peace,

Pastor David

Celebrate New Church Development Sunday

New Church Development Sunday, celebrated on December 28, is a time to gather together to celebrate and recognize the ministry of new communities within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).



Join with your congregation in welcoming new congregations into the PC(USA). Take time in your worship service to see how you can be a partner with new church developments and their programs all over the United States. Use the available resources — prayers, a call to worship, hymn suggestions, a minute for mission and other worship suggestions — to celebrate and pray for God's continued blessing on these new churches. You can find those resources by going to: www.pcusa.org/churchgrowth/newchurchsunday.htm.

Attention: Clerks of Session

There are several forms that Clerks of Session of PTCA congregations need to fill out before January 31. Among these are Necrology Forms, Members of Session Form and Current Clerk of Session form. You can download these forms by going to the Presbytery Resources page (www.ptcaweb.org/RESOURCES/presbytery_resources.html).

Remember, these forms are due on January 31, 2009.

Presbyterian

Clearwater Forest

16595 Crooked Lake Road
Deerwood, MN 56444-8328
218-678-2325
www.clearwaterforest.org

2009

Program Calendar



Jan 23-25	Snow Camp	July 19-25	Creative Arts Festival
Feb 20-23	Winter Chrysalis		Wilderness (Jr. & Sr. High)
Mar 27-29	Confirmation Retreat	July 26-Aug. 1	Discovery 4
Apr 24-26	Sr. High Spring Retreat		Adventure 4
June 14-20	Discovery Camp Blast Off!	1 st week	Sr. High Two Week Camp
	Adventure Blast Off!		Pedal, Paddle, Climb Camp
	Teen Arts Camp	August 2-8	Discovery 5
1 st week	Jr. High Two Week Camp		Adventure 5
1 st week	Sr. High Two Week Camp	2 nd week	Sr. High Two Week Camp
June 19-21	Family Camp Weekend	August 9-15	Discovery 6
June 21-27	Discovery 1		Adventure 6
	Adventure 1		Endless Summer Sr. High
2 nd week	Jr. High Two Week Camp	August 19	Quilting Day Chrysalis option
2 nd week	Sr. High Two Week Camp	August 20-23	Chrysalis
	Sr. High Beach Camp	August 24-27	Seniors Retreat
June 28-July 1	First Timers Camp	August 23-29	Pastors Boundary Waters
	Grands Camp	August 25-30	Adult Kayak, outer islands
July 5-11	Discovery 2	October 16-18	Middle School Retreat
	Adventure 2	October 30-November 1	Senior High Fall Retreat
1 st week	Counselor In Training (CIT)	November 13-15	Confirmation Retreat
	Jr. High Sailing		
	Sr. High Kayak		
July 11	Friends Day		
July 12-18	Discovery 3		
	Adventure 3		
2 nd week	CIT		
	Sr. High Sailing		
	Jr. High Kayak		
July 18-23	Adult Kayak, inner islands		
July 17-19	Adult Sailing Weekend		

Looking Ahead to 2010

Snow Camp – Jan. 22-24, 2010
Chrysalis – Feb. 12-15, 2010
Confirmation Retreat – Mar 19-21, 2010
Sr. High Spring Retreat – April 23-25, 2010
Middle School Retreat – Oct 15-17, 2010
Sr. High Fall Retreat – Oct 29-31, 2010
Confirmation Fall Retreat – Nov 12-14, 2010

A camp, conference center and program ministry of the presbyteries of Minnesota Valleys, Northern Plains, Northern Waters, Twin Cities Area, and the Synod of Lakes and Prairies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Volunteer need remains great in East Iowa Presbytery

By Presbyterian Neighbor News

IOWA CITY, Iowa - In June the face of Eastern Iowa changed forever. With the beginning of the floods of 2008. While the water rose and fell, more than 6,000 homes were affected. Scores of people from around the country have come to help, and volunteers in local congregations like Christ Church Presbyterian, Westminster Presbyterian and Echo Hill Presbyterian in Cedar Rapids, and St. Andrew Presbyterian in Iowa City have been working almost non-stop since the water hit.

"One of the blessings our presbytery received from God was two retired couples who knew something about construction and could provide daily support for our local church volunteer coordinators," said Sarah Dyck, long-term disaster recovery coordinator for the Presbytery of East Iowa.

"These angels from God are a major reason our church members could keep going. Without their support, our local coordinators would have burned out long before now," she said. But Dyck noted that those who could spend weeks at a time assessing homes and overseeing reconstruction work have needed to rest as well.

As the folks in Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas can tell you, just because the disasters there are long gone from the front pages of newspapers does not mean the need for help is gone. In Cedar Rapids, as well as in the towns of Vinton, Palo, Iowa City, and Oakville many homes have had initial work done, but need more attention to become habitable. More than 800 still have not been touched.

"We're desperate for the kind of expertise and time commitment skilled retired folks can provide," Dyck said.

"Our presbytery has been blessed with people like Ray and Jane Isom of Princeton (Iowa) Presbyterian and Stan and Tonny Tate of Columbus Junction (Iowa) Presbyterian. The Isoms and the Tates were able to oversee and advise volunteers about the reconstruction work being done on flood-affected homes. It is our hope that others will feel called to provide this same kind of assistance," she said.

The Presbytery of East Iowa is specifically looking for individuals or couples who can provide daily support for the hospitality site and work site coordinators so that those coordinators - some of whom still hold full-time jobs - can keep going.

"We're looking for people who can travel around to the homes being worked on by our volunteers and ensure the work is being done correctly," Dyck said. Some of these tasks include making sure drywall is being installed properly, that the mudding process is being done right, and that framing meets code.

Dyck said those feeling called by God to assist the people of Eastern Iowa or those who may know of people who might be able to help can contact her at sdyck@peia.org or at (800) 957-4389.

A Time For Prayer



The office hours of the PTCA office are Monday-Friday, 8:30am-4:30pm. Please keep in mind that the office has a daily time for devotion and prayer from 9:00am-9:30am and we will not be answering the phone or email at that time. Please feel free to leave a message and we will get back to after morning devotions.

Presbytery and Churchwide Events

Save the Date: Day on the Hill February 3, 2009

Sponsored by the [Joint Religious Legislative Coalition](#), Day on the Hill is the largest, most influential lobbying day in Minnesota.

Christmas Tree Sale at Valley-The annual Youth Mission Trip Christmas Tree Fundraiser will begin on Saturday, November 29 at Valley Presbyterian Church in Golden Valley. There will be several variety of trees available: Balsam Fir, Canaan Fir, Colorado Spruce, Fraser Fir, White Pine and White Spruce. This year there will be a large selection of trees for \$25 or less. As always, your tree will have a name.

Hours of Operation:

Thursdays and Fridays: 4:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Saturdays: 9:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Sundays: 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The tree lot is open through Saturday, December 20. Valley is located at 3100 Lilac Drive, Golden Valley. You can contact them at (763)588-0831 or by email at vcpc@minn.net.

Spend 2009 with John Calvin's Institutes- Princeton Theological Seminary is inviting the church, the academy, and individual Christians around the world to celebrate the 500th anniversary of John Calvin's birth by participating in "A Year with the *Institutes*," a daily reading of Calvin's major work, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, during 2009. Calvin, the most important founding theologian of the Reformed theological tradition, was born July 10, 1509. His *Institutes* represent a systematized approach to Reformed theology, written with a pastor's heart in service to the church of Calvin's day.

Princeton Seminary, through its Center of Continuing Education, will provide a daily reading schedule and text of a three-to-six-page section of the 1559 version of the *Institutes* for each day of 2009, except Sundays and Christmas Day, online on its [web site](#). The readings, using the McNeill/Battles translation of the *Institutes*, thanks to permission from Westminster John Knox Press, will also be provided in audio format, as a podcast, with sections read by oral performers from around the country. Michael Brothers, an assistant professor of speech communication in ministry at Princeton Seminary, will direct this part of the project.

Each week an invited scholar or pastor will provide a reflection paper on that week's readings on the [web site](#), and participants will be able to comment on both the readings and the reflection papers. The project was the brainchild of Princeton Seminary's Christian education assistant professor Gordon Mikoski, who decided to read through the *Institutes* as part of his Christian devotional practice to commemorate the anniversary year of Calvin's birth. As he told friends and colleagues about his idea, they wanted to join him.

"While browsing through the Westminster John Knox book display at the American Academy of Religion meeting in November, I came upon new copies of the *Institutes*," Mikoski said. "It occurred to me that reading them cover-to-cover from January 1 through December 31, 2009 would be an appropriate way to honor Calvin's life and work."

Mikoski believes such disciplined reading of the *Institutes* can remind the church of its rooting in God, not itself. Calvin wrote that "we are not our own; insofar as we can, let us forget ourselves and all that is ours. Conversely, we are God's: let his wisdom and will therefore rule all our actions; let all parts of our life accordingly strive toward him as our only lawful goal." (*Institutes* 3.7.1)

Mikoski's project was enthusiastically received by the Erdman Center of Continuing Education, which is sponsoring a number of events in 2009 to celebrate the [Calvin anniversary](#). The first of these is 2009's first global Calvin conference, "Calvin and the Church Today," January 20-23, 2009.

Princeton Seminary hopes pastors, lay people, and scholars will take this opportunity to read and interact with the work of a theological giant in the Reformed tradition, with a community of Christians across the church and the world.

In addition to Mikoski and Brothers, steering committee members for the project include students Jason Santos, Michael Gyura, Katherine Douglass; Raymond Bonwell, director of programs for the Center of Continuing Education; Barbara Chaapel, the Seminary's director of communications; and Joyce MacKichan Walker, a member of the pastoral staff of Nassau Presbyterian Church in Princeton.

For information about how to participate in "A Year with the *Institutes*," and for answers to questions, visit www.ptsem.edu/calvin2009 or email calvin2009@ptsem.edu.

If Not We, Then Who? - Join other leaders from business, government, and communities of faith as Minnesota Commits to End Poverty by 2020.

- **Show Up.** Add your support to the historic vision and significant recommendations proposed by the Legislative Commission to End Poverty by 2020.
- **Stand Up** for people experiencing poverty.
- **Sign Up.** Add your name and support to a movement that will put an end to poverty in Minnesota.
- **Speak Up.** Tell the story in your place of worship and in your community.

If Not We, Then Who? If Not Now, Then When?

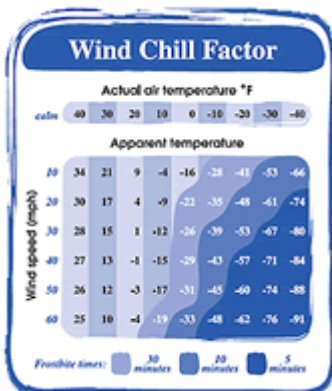
Ending poverty is possible when we show up, stand up, sign up, and speak up.

A Minnesota Without Poverty is a statewide, interfaith movement to end poverty in Minnesota by 2020 and a program of Minnesota Council of Churches. www.mnwithoutpoverty.org

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Congregational Care of vulnerable People in Cold Weather

-From National Health Ministries of the PC(USA)



Extremely cold weather makes life more difficult for people who are vulnerable because of chronic health conditions, people who are on fixed incomes, frail people, poor people who live in housing that is drafty and poorly insulated and homeless people and animals who live out doors.

If you know someone in one of the categories listed above, as a minimum, check on him/her routinely during the harsh weather. Check on him/her in person since someone might hesitate to reveal her/his situation.

Here are some suggestions for congregational care groups or individuals who wish help:

- Provide ride services for people who typically walk or use public transportation that might require a long wait in the cold.
- Organize groups to go to homes and clear walks and outdoor steps of ice and snow. Be certain that areas around church buildings are clear as well.
- Rising energy costs will cause some people who are on fixed incomes to try to conserve heat and keep energy bills lower. Use of alternative heating such as space heaters and fireplaces can increase risk of fire. Evaluate the safety of space heaters and arrange for professional assessment of fireplaces - this can prevent injury or death.
- Help those who are eligible for energy assistance submit applications by providing transportation or by letting them know that such programs are available.
- If you have a visitation team, try to make certain everyone you visit gets a hot meal.
- Help people who have mobility issues care for pets during extremely cold weather. This is a great way to involve young people in congregational care.
- Assist with grocery shopping, trips to pharmacies and health care providers when travel is hazardous but make certain that drivers are skilled in navigating snow and ice covered roads and streets.
- Stop by to visit folks who cannot engage in their typical social activities due to the inclement weather.
- Open a winter clothing bank through the church for those who do not have adequate cold weather clothing.

These just may be a few among the many needs of your congregation and community. Think about the individual needs of people you know and be creative as you show concern for others.



Financial Aid Available

Do you know a senior in high school who is considering attending a Presbyterian-related college next year? Visit www.pcusa.org/financialaid to determine if he or she might qualify for the National Presbyterian Scholarship. The application is due Jan. 31. For a complete list of PC(USA) related schools go to <http://www.pcusa.org/financialaid/pdfs/pcusaschools.pdf>.

Presbytery Packets Available for Download

www.presbyterytwincities.org/presyterypacket

St. Paul pastor won't let East Side victims of violence be forgotten

Candlelight vigil tradition follows him from L.A. to East Side

By Myra H. Gottfried

St. Paul Pioneer Press (reprinted with permission)



Howard Dotson (far left wearing a red shirt and brown sports jacket) leads a prayer vigil in East St. Paul. Photo courtesy St. Paul Pioneer Press.

When the Rev. Howard Dotson was a pastor in Los Angeles, he vowed to hold a candlelight vigil for every homicide victim from his neighborhood. But in an area where there were once 15 homicides in 15 weeks, Dotson recalled it was almost too much for one person to handle.

Now, as interim pastor at St. Paul's Arlington Hills Presbyterian Church, Dotson has brought the candlelight vigil tradition to the East Side. St. Paul doesn't have anywhere close to the number of homicides as L.A., a city with roughly 14 times as many people. There have been 18 slayings in St. Paul this year and 357 in Los Angeles, as of

Tuesday.

Still, the need for vigils carries over to St. Paul, Dotson said. He said he plans to hold gatherings when there is a "traumatic act of violence" on the East Side. "There is a spiritual component when the community comes out and says, 'This isn't going to be tolerated,'" Dotson said. "It does have an impact."

Dotson is planning a vigil today (December 17) for the city's most recent homicide victim. Leon Dewaun May, 32, was fatally shot outside his girlfriend's home at 417 Jessamine Ave. on Dec. 11. Four people have been charged in the apparently drug-related case. Sarah Banashak, who said she and May had been together for more than 10 years and have two children together, said she liked the idea of a vigil for May. Of May's killing, she said, "This is definitely something he did not deserve."

Since Dotson came to Arlington Hills Presbyterian on July 20, he has organized two other East Side vigils.

One was for Jaques Jamir Dortch, an 18-year-old woman who police said didn't appear to be the intended target of a fatal shooting. The other was for a woman named Tammie who was brutally beaten by strangers with baseball bats while walking around Lake Phalen in August.

Betty Brandt Passick, an Arlington Hills parishioner who lives in Oakdale, brought some youth from the church to Dortch's vigil. She normally wouldn't have attended, but she said she was glad she did.

Continued on Page 18

Positions Available

For more information on the positions listed below, please go to the PTCA website at <http://www.ptcaweb.org/RESOURCES/openpositions.htm>.

- **Christian Education Coordinator (Part-Time), Grace-Trinity Community Church, Minneapolis**
- **Youth Coordinator Assistant (Part-Time), Macalester-Plymouth United Church, St. Paul**
- **Director of Children's, Youth, Family Programming, St. Luke Presbyterian, Wayzata**
- **Organist (Part-Time)- Calvin Presbyterian, Long Lake**
- **Nursery Attendant- Plymouth Presbyterian, Plymouth**

Do you have a church staff position that needs to be filled? Send in your job announcements to Dennis Sanders at communications@ptcaweb.org. (Oh, and let us know when you fill the position, so we can remove it from the job listings.)

Future 2009 Stated Meetings and Locations

- **January 10, 2009, 9:00am-3:00pm, First Presbyterian Church, Stillwater**
- **March 14, 2009, 9:00am-3:00pm, Faith Presbyterian Church, Minnetonka**

Please go to the PTCA website for more updates.

PTCA Churches Accepting PIFs

- **Designated Pastor- Knox Presbyterian, St. Paul**
- **Pastor- Oak Grove Presbyterian, Bloomington**
- **Solo Pastor- First Presbyterian, Claremont**
- **Pastor- First Presbyterian, White Bear Lake**

To find out more information about these openings, please go to the Church Leadership Connection Opportunities webpage (www.pcusa.org/clc).

Skill Bank Forms Available



Are you interested in serving on a presbytery, synod or GA committee? Do you have talents and gifts that could be put work in the service of the church and the wider world? If so, consider filling out a skill bank form. Skill bank forms allow the Nominating Committee to find people with needed skills to serve effectively. To fill out a form, simply go to our Forms and Policies Page, www.ptcaweb.org/RESOURCES/presbyteryresources.html.

Presbytery Events, continued

“Film and Faith: Differing Views of Jesus through Film” at Presbyterian Church of the Way, 3382 N. Lexington Ave. in Shoreview, January 14, 21, 28, & February 4, 2009(4-week series open to both adults and youth).

How has Jesus been portrayed through various films? How have these portrayals been shaped by the events and culture of the movie’s contemporary times, and how did the portrayals themselves help shape the viewers’ attitudes and impressions of who Jesus was? Is the film and its message about Jesus relevant to us today, and if so, why?

Four films have been selected based on their differing time periods, points of view, assumptions, and messages. The films and presenters are:

- January 14: Last Temptation of Christ (1988).
Directed by Martin Scorsese (Kathy Smith, Presbyterian minister).
- January 21: Greatest Story Ever Told (1965).
Directed by George Stevens (Marilyn Husnik, PCOTW member).
- January 28: Passion of the Christ (2004).
Directed by Mel Gibson (Reverend Todd Allen).
- February 4: Jesus Christ Superstar (1973).
Directed by Norman Jewison; based on 1970 musical by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice (Kathy Smith).

During the classes, the films will NOT be shown in their entirety; however, short clips may be shown to illustrate a point. You are encouraged to view the film ahead of time, but it is not necessary since the presenters will give a brief history of the film including the background of the director’s motivation and the contemporary times. For more information, please contact Church of the Way at (651) 484-3346 or by email at info@pcotw.org.

New Course at United Seminary- CL891 Conflict and the Congregation: Restoration and Resilience, Jean Greenwood, Instructor

Congregational conflict will be explored from a restorative perspective that seeks to repair harm, restore relationships, renew hope, build resilience. Students will gain understanding about the nature of conflict, identify their conflict styles, develop skills in conflict resolution and transformation, create strategies for use within religious communities, and cultivate beginning skills in restorative processes, including mediation and the circle process. Case studies, personal experience, and role plays will be utilized. Particular attention will be given to the nature of congregational life and to biblical perspectives and theological dimensions.

No prerequisites; course meets Tuesdays 8:15 to 11:30 am, February 2 - May 15, 2009

For information about registration as a non-degree student, for credit or auditing, consult the seminary’s website, www.unitedseminary.edu or call 651.633.4311 or 800.937.1316. For further information about the course, please contact Jean at 612.825.4927.

Association of Presbyterian Church Educator Annual Event - January 28-31, 2009, San Antonio, TX. For more information or to register, please go to the organization’s website at www.apcenet.org.

Travel to Greece and Turkey-Join Revs. Tom & Lisa Watson on a journey to Turkey and Greece this April 25-May 6. The program themes include Apostle Paul, Byzantium and the Modern World with visits to Istanbul, Troy, Izmir, Pergamon, Ephesus, Patmos, Crete, Santorini, Corinth and Athens. The tour is comprehensive with airfare from the Twin Cities, seven nights hotel, two nights on a Greek Island cruise and professional guides throughout.

For a brochure and details contact: Tom Watson at First Presbyterian Church, South St. Paul: 651-451-6223 or tomw@fpcssp.org.

NEWS

Presbyterian News Service

Presbyterian News Service Index

The following news stories can be found at the Presbyterian News Service website:
www.pcusa.org/news

- *PNS to take a holiday break: Office closed except for emergencies from Dec. 19-Jan 5-*
www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08947.htm
- *Terri Bate to head GAC's funds development ministry : Veteran fund-raiser has worked for Outward Bound, Habitat for Humanity-* **www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08941.htm**
- *Building houses of peace, bridges to the future : 'Junior Year Abroad' participants gather at Ghost Ranch-* **www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08936.htm**
- *Notes About People-* **www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08937.htm**
- *Seminary News-***www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08943.htm**

New Resources from Disabilities Concerns Taskforce



The Disabilities Concerns Task Force of the Presbytery have two new resources available: an article about how to evacuate persons with disabilities in churches during emergencies, and an updated list of resources for persons with disabilities and their loved ones. To download either resource or to see what else is available to assist you and your congregation become more inclusive, please go to the

Disabilities Concerns Task Force webpage at www.ptcaweb.org/COMM/disabilityconcerns.htm .

Pastor, continued



"If you were baptized in the church, you're called to be a peacemaker."

-Rev. Howard Dotson, Interim Pastor, Arlington Hills Presbyterian Church.

Photo from Arlington Hills Presbyterian

Church website.

"I got a firsthand experience of what it feels like to be living life in a more dangerous community, where gunshots are fired and people are trying to keep their children safe," Passick said.

At the vigils, there are "songs of peace," remembrances of the victim and biblical passages, Dotson said.

"It's not about proselytizing, but trying to reach youth that have some connection to the church and may have lost their way," he said. "If you were baptized in the church, you're called to be a peacemaker."

Dotson, who has master's degrees in psychology and divinity, has a particular interest in gang violence and helping victims of it. He said he's working on a doctorate of ministry through the San Francisco Theological Seminary about "how clergy can be empowered to be crisis counselors."

He is looking into how communication and response time can be improved between L.A. police and volunteer clergy councils and is assessing the benefits of a similar model in St. Paul and other cities.

Dotson, originally from Maple Grove, worked as a pastor in Los Angeles for three years.

He was also an HIV/AIDS counselor in Kenya for a year.



Christmas Blessings from the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area Staff

"For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty
God,
Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace."
-Isaiah 9:6

Chaz Ruark

Nancy Grittman

Risa Anderson

Dennis Sanders

Early Christmas Present

Rev. Matthew Robbins-Ghormley, Pastor at Randolph Heights Presbyterian Church in St. Paul, holds Samuel Thomas Robbins-Ghormley, who was welcomed into the world on December 1, 2008 at St. Joseph's Hospital in St. Paul weighing 8 pounds and 9 ounces. Matthew noted that his wife Amber went into labor on what turned out to be the First Sunday in Advent, which he said seemed fitting.

Mother, father and child are all well.



Peacemaking Grants Available

St Luke Presbyterian Church has \$ 15,000 available for grants to organizations or individuals for projects related to peacemaking. We are open to new ideas which will make a difference. Applications are due on December 31, 2008. Contact the church for application forms.

St. Luke Presbyterian Church
Peace and Justice Focus Group
3121 Groveland School Road
Wayzata, MN 55391
(952) 473-7378
stluke@pmlink.com

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"EMerge," is a weekly publication from the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area (PTCA). The mission is to share brief highlights with links to resources and news. Recipients include congregations, minister members, other members, committees, and friends. Please send submissions and e-mail corrections to Dennis Sanders, editor, at communications@ptcaweb.org. Usual distribution: Fridays. Deadline: Wednesday (two days before distribution).

GOD WILL DO WONDERS AMONG YOU



2009 Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women

Louisville, Kentucky
July 11–15, 2009

- ◆ Experience the wonder of being in community with more than 3,000 Christian women from across the country and around the world.
- ◆ Be challenged and inspired by plenary speakers and worship leaders.
- ◆ Attend morning forums and afternoon workshops on a variety of topics, including the 2009–2010 *Horizons* Bible study, *Joshua*, by Mary Mikhael.
- ◆ Visit the Great Room—a place to wander and wonder—for music, mission projects, resources, exhibits, Global Marketplace, conversation and relaxation.
- ◆ Celebrate working together for 20 years as Presbyterian Women, inheriting the legacy of Presbyterian women's groups before us.
- ◆ Witness the installation of PV leaders for the 2009–2012 triennium.
- ◆ Learn how God can and will do wonders among you!

Registration for the full event includes 10 meals, all programs, tote bag and program book. Registration booklets will be available in the September/October 2008 issue of *Horizons*. Additional copies may be ordered from Presbyterian Distribution Service, 800/524-2612, item CWG-09-001.

Early-bird registration (on or before May 15, 2009)—\$380
Regular registration (after May 15, 2009)—\$430
Weekend (Saturday evening and Sunday) registration—\$150
One-day registration—\$140

CWG-09-031

For more information, visit www.pcusa.org/pwgathering.