



Spinning the multicultural church web

by Sandy Sweep
Special to Presbyterian News Service

ATLANTA — In his opening dialogue at the Multicultural Church Conference here June 12, the Rev. Jin S. Kim, pastor at [Church of All Nations in Minneapolis](#), admitted he is a racist.

And he expects everyone in his congregation to do the same.

“While there has always been evil among humans, the introduction of racism has heightened oppression among mankind the last 500 years,” said Kim, in an address entitled “Becoming a Multicultural Church: Biblical Foundations for a Beloved

Community.”

Kim’s admission came as part of the at the denomination’s June 11-13 [Big Tent](#) event, a collection of 10 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) conferences meeting together with joint worship, shared meals and a plethora or workshops that were open to all.

Throughout recent history, explained Kim, groups of people have faced oppression by others seeking dominance. This oppression, said Kim, is made easier when “the targeted group is made out to be less than human.”



Rev. Jin S. Kim, pastor of Church of All Nations Presbyterian Church in Columbia Heights and moderator of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area, pictured with his family.

In this issue:

Multi-cultural church : More on Jin S. Kim’s admission of being a racist.

Introducing Presbybriefs: New Additions for the family of Zach Wilson, news on the Big Tent Event , the PCUSA supports Health Care for All, winners of Walton Award announced.

Events Calendar: Celebrating Community Together @ North Como; Job Transitions Groups at Lake Nokomis and Christ Presbyterian, Synod School, a workshop on mental illness at Church of the Way.

Peaceful Presence: David Colby, pastor of Central Presbyterian in St. Paul talks about the shock of Jesus’ resurrection.



Web, Continued



“While there has always been evil among humans, the introduction of racism has heightened oppression among mankind the last 500 years,” -Jim Kim, Pastor, Church of All Nations, Columbia Heights.

Want to know more about Church of All Nations? Go to their website at www.cando.org.

Kim cited historical references such as the 1758 study by Swedish botanist Carolus Linnaeus, who named humans, *homo sapiens*, and then created four subcategories:

- Red Americans (*americanus*) — ill tempered
- Yellow Asians (*asiaticus*) — severe and haughty
- Black Africans (*afere*) — crafty and slow
- White Europeans (*europaeus*) — active and very smart

This mindset, stated Kim, is in direct violation of God’s word that *“God created humankind in his image ... male and female ... God saw everything he had made, and indeed, it was very good.”* (Genesis 1:27-31).

Kim added that it is only by admitting these false inequities among humankind that healing can occur. The members of his congregation, however, are “only going to be willing to risk as much as the pastor,” declared Kim. This, he says, is the basis for his racist admission.

So, how does Kim address the race issue where his congregation consists of 37 percent Caucasian, 3 percent Asian, 22 percent African American, and 10 percent Latino, and where more than 25 different nationalities worship each week?

“We build trust,” Kim simply stated. “A person may have faith that their brothers and sisters in Christ are sincere, but would they trust them with their children and money?” he asked.

To build this trust among church members, one sermon each month consists of several members sharing their faith stories. Following the service, there is a laying on of hands by the entire congregation. “In this way, our individual faith stories (and the racial and cultural influences) are shared and

joined together in a kind of spiritual spider web,” said Kim.

Another part of this sharing is the celebration of diversity. “Getting past our racial differences doesn’t mean denying our culture or heritage,” explained Kim. “If anyone attends three or more times at our church, they will see their own heritage come through in the service.”

Getting Back to “WHY”

By Neil Craigan

I have just finished reading Jim Collins new book, "How The Mighty Fall." It is a fascinating, albeit brief, look at why organizations that appear to be highly successful falter. It is well worth the read and church leaders need to take heed of the warning signs.

One of the first markers of decline (take note church folks) is when "what" replaces "why." As Collins notes, "the rhetoric of success ("We're successful because we do these specific things") replaces understanding and insight ("We're successful because we understand *why* we do these specific things and under what conditions they would no longer work"). I'm not sure that there's a greater issue than this in struggling mainline churches.

I've never been in a church that hasn't had a deeply rooted way of doing things and old-time leaders who staunchly defend them. Oftentimes we call them "traditions" and that somehow makes them sacred, but what happens when that tradition (the what) no longer conforms to the tradition (the why), which one wins out? In the church it's usually the tradition of what and not why that triumphs.

I believe that the church needs to once again get back to the "Why" of everything it does and make sure that the "What" and the "why" are aligned with one another.

I should also add that churches need to honestly and candidly be clear about the "why not" as well. It's not enough to say, "we've never done it that way" or "some people won't like that." The "why not" answer needs to be that it doesn't serve God's purposes for the local church.

Constantly asking "why" while not a panacea for all church ailments will go a long way to helping the church connect in a relevant way with people of the twenty-first century (that's the present) rather than the mid-twentieth century or earlier (that's the past and no one lives there as time has progressed).

Neil Craigan is pastor of First Presbyterian Church in White Bear Lake, MN. The article was from his blog, NeilCraigan.com.

Presbyfest 2009

Presbyfest is back! This year's festival of all things Presbyterian will take place on Saturday, November 14 at Oak Grove Presbyterian in Bloomington. The theme is "Celebrating John Calvin and Five Centuries of Reformed Lay Leadership." The Keynote speaker for this year is Cynthia Rigby, Professor of Theology at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Information on classes will be available in July. If you are a congregational lay leader looking for ideas or resources to further the ministry at your congregation, then Presbyfest is for you. Please go to www.presbyterytwincities.org/presbyfest2009 to download a promotion flyer.



“One of the first markers of decline (take note church folks) is when ‘what’ replaces ‘why.’” -Neil Craigan, Pastor First, White Bear Lake.

**Presbyfest '09
November 14
Oak Grove Pres-
byterian, Bloom-
ington**

Presbybriefs: News At A Glance

New Baby for Wilson Family: Zach Wilson, the pastor of Spirit of Life Presbyterian Church in Apple Valley and Jen Rome, a Lutheran pastor, are the proud parents of Adeliade Rose Wilson born on Tuesday, June 23 at 3:32am. Adelaide is 7lbs 4ounces and is 20 inches long. The family is doing well.

Up, Up and Away: Presbyterian Church of the Way in Shoreview is starting its year-long celebration of its 50th anniversary in an "uplifting" way: by flying hang gliders.

People can order the balsa-wood kits online. At the 50th anniversary picnic, Rev. Todd Allen will lead the members in flying their creations. Prizes will be given to the best design as well as a special prize for the one glider that stay in the air longer than 50 seconds.

The picnic is July 26.

1500 Gather for Big Tent Event: "I can't believe this. I'm in a room with 1,500 Presbyterians and I'm not packing a Book of Order." With those words, General Assembly Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons greeted an enthusiastic throng that packed a Hyatt Regency ballroom in Atlanta for the first ever Big Tent event, a combined gathering of 10 PC(USA) conferences that fulfills a dream of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) leaders since the denomination moved to biennial legislative General Assemblies five years ago. "I'm the moderator but there's no business to transact," General Assembly Moderator Bruce Reyes-Chow told the crowd just prior to opening worship. "What do Presbyterians do when there's no business to conduct? They worship and they talk about mission and celebrate their unity in God's spirit!"

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to participate in Interfaith Week of Prayer for Health Care for All: The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is participating in the largest faith-inspired mobilization for health care reform in an *Interfaith Week of Prayer for Health Care for All*, June 19-26. This is the largest event of its kind ever organized. The week will feature an Interfaith Service of Witness and Prayer on Wednesday, June 24, 4:00-8:00 pm, at Washington, DC's Freedom Plaza, in view of our nation's Capitol.

A critical part of this mobilization will include "echo events" where members of faith communities all across the country will be lifting up their common concern for equitable health care reform. Beginning Friday, June 19th, prayer breakfasts, Health Care Sabbaths, bell ringing, candle-light vigils, call-in days, postcards, media events and more will give peo-

ple of faith the opportunity to make a public witness about the moral imperative of health care for all.

PC(USA) has a long history of calling for health care for all through a national medical plan, and in 2008 endorsed the principle of single payer health care reform. Debate about health care reform is well underway in the halls of Congress. This week of prayer and action is one of many ways that people of faith can weigh in on the health care reform debate.

Visit the [Web site \(http://data.rac.org/bt/\)](http://data.rac.org/bt/) for more information about the events.

2009 Walton Award winners announced : Eight Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) new church developments have been named winners of the 2009 Sam & Helen R. Walton Awards. Each congregation was selected for its imaginative, skillful approach to new church ministry by the Mission Development Resources Committee (MDRC) and will receive \$50,000 for assistance in site acquisition and capital improvement. Two of the churches are in California, two in Florida. The other four are in Kansas, New Jersey, South Carolina and Texas. The NCD's are diverse — congregations are Caucasian, Hispanic, Asian-American, English-Swahili speaking and Multi-Cultural. The Walton Awards were established in 1991 as part of a \$6 million gift from the late Sam and Helen Walton — founders of Wal-Mart — through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation. Half of the gift created an endowment, the interest on which funds the awards.

The 2009 Walton Award winners are:

Highlands Presbyterian Church, Paso Robles, Ca, Synod of Southern California & Hawaii, Santa Barbara Presbytery: 1,000 people attend four worship services at this three year old new NCD, whose ministry is primarily to the non-churched. Highlands has reached out to the vineyard worker, blue-collar, Harley-Davidson rider and cowboy-rancher communities in their region. The church will use the Walton award to finish their educational/office wing, finish city-



Presbybriefs: News At A Glance

mandated landscaping, complete their nature/bike trails and begin funding construction of their sanctuary.

Santa Maria (Ca) Presbyterian Church, Synod of Southern California & Hawaii, Santa Barbara Presbytery: New Covenant NCD and First Presbyterian Church, Santa Maria faced declining membership and internal strife after losing pastors. In 2007, they became a new multi-cultural church. New ministries like Monday Night Football half-time Bible Studies reach younger men and Teenage MOPS is a safe place for teenage mothers to bring their children. The new congregation has successfully trained English and Spanish-speaking lay-leadership in a Presbytery program. They will use the Walton award to renovate their sanctuary and improve their education and fellowship ministry.

Iglesia Presbiteriana Monte Sinai', Apopka, FL, Synod of South Atlantic, Central Florida Presbytery: 80 percent of the members of this five year-old NCD were previously un-churched. The Hispanic congregation will use Walton award for the construction, repair and expansion of the main building on their property, to renovate another building, prepare the site for expansion, resurface and enlarge their parking lot.

Peace Presbyterian NCD, Lakewood Ranch, FL, Synod of South Atlantic, Peace River Presbytery: This 118-member congregation whose desire is to make God known by growing disciples of Jesus Christ, plans to charter in 2009. The Walton award will help them [purchase property](#) and build their ministry.

Neema Community Fellowship, Overland Park, Ks Synod of Mid-America, Heartland Presbytery: The goal of this develop-

ing church is to serve immigrants who come to the US, especially from Africa. They plan to become a chartered Swahili & English speaking congregation and hope to purchase a church building within the next two years.

Top Stone Church, Englewood, NJ, Synod of the Northeast, Eastern Korean Presbytery: This Korean church, devoted to God through service to each other and their community, grew 38 percent last year. The Walton award will help them purchase a building and expand their outreach through more ministries and service programs.

New Kirk Presbyterian Church, Blythewood, SC, Synod of South Atlantic, Trinity Presbytery: In March, this NCD that started with just 20 people broke ground on their first building to the delight of 183 adult and 90 children. The Walton award will allow them to provide more paved parking or build a welcoming and inviting space that would include a coffee bar, fireplace and comfortable seating.

Biyaya Community Church, Missouri City, TX, Synod of the Sun, New Covenant Presbytery: Chartered in May of 2008, this Asian American church started with 14 adults and one child on Easter of 1999. Now 75 active members, including children, hope to buy property with an existing building that can accommodate a congregation of their size, to allow for a broader variety of church and social functions.

Since 1993, there have been 92 Walton Awards totaling \$3.7 million presented to exemplary new church developments from 63 presbyteries in all 16 synods.

Friends and Neighbors Day @ Clearwater Forest: Friends & Neighbors Day, on Saturday, July 11th, is an annual event hosted by Presbyterian Clearwater Forest. This event provides our friends and neighbors with the opportunity to visit PCF and to see what we are all about. Clearwater Forest invites you to join them for a day in the sun to experience all PCF has to offer; from guided nature hikes, kayaking, canoeing, sailing, high ropes course, live music and great food, you will have the opportunity experience it all. For more information, contact the office at 218-678-2325. Reservations are required for lunch and dinner.

Positions Available

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

- Director of Music, Presbyterian Church of the Way, Shoreview
- Church Business Administrator, North Como Presbyterian Church, Roseville
- Church Administrative Assistant, Peace Presbyterian Church, St. Louis Park
- Youth Ministry Director, Associated Church (Presbyterian-UCC), Owatonna
- Youth Ministries Director, First Presbyterian Church, White Bear Lake
- Christian Education Director, First Presbyterian Church, White Bear Lake
- Youth Ministry Coordinator, North Como Presbyterian Church, Roseville
- Children & Family Ministry Coordinator, North Como Presbyterian Church, Roseville
- Christian Education /Youth Leader, Presbyterian Church of the Apostles, Burnsville
- Director of Christian Education, Trinity Presbyterian, Woodbury

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.)

The following PTCA Congregations are accepting Personal Information Forms (PIF):

- Associate Pastor– St. Luke Presbyterian, Wayzata
- Pastor– Buffalo Presbyterian, Buffalo
- Pastor– First Presbyterian, Claremont

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

Events Calendar

Do you have an event you'd like to publicize? Please send it to Dennis Sanders at communications@ptcaweb.org.

Celebrating Community Together at North Como:

Celebrating Community Together, or CCT, is a Children and Family program for the summer. Through three evening sessions and one afternoon session, the intention of CCT is to bring children and families of North Como together to learn more about what North Como does outside of its walls and celebrate those activities and affiliations. Each evening activity is from 6-7:30 pm, intended to fit just after dinner and just before bed. Activities are geared toward children up through 5th grade, to be done alongside and with parents. There is no fee for the first three sessions, while only a nominal fee for the Twins game!

Thursday, July 9th: CCT – God's Creation

"God created a wonderful world and told people to take good care of it. Here's your chance! Come help our baby tree, do a little work and have a lot of fun with some "green" activities and games. Members of the Environmental Team will help lead the evening which will include recycling plastics #'s 1, 2, 4, 5, & 6 – plastics NOT collected by curbside recycling. Whether or not you plan to participate in the evening session, be sure to drop off those plastics or send them with a friend. We'll need everyone's support and want to fill up the truck!!"

Wednesday, July 29th: CCT – Creativity

Come and explore ways that we can celebrate community through music! Stations during this event will include bells, puppets, drama, art, and drums! There will be a lot of joyful noise to be made together! Jennifer Anderson and other members of the music ministry program will be helping with the evening.

Saturday, August 15th: CCT – Play!

In celebration of the end of the summer and as a capstone to the CCT series, we will attend a Twins Game on Saturday, August 15th. The game starts at 3 pm, so we will gather at the church to carpool and then enjoy the game together versus the Cleveland Indians. (The cost is \$10 per person, including a ticket, hot dog, and soda!)

We would love to see you there...if you are interested in attending, please contact the North Como church office by calling 651-488-5581.

. If you have any questions, please contact Bobbie Bigwood, NCPC Elder serving Education and Nurture, at gbbigwood@hotmail.com or by leaving a message at the church office.

Job Support Groups at Christ Presbyterian: Christ Presbyterian in Edina offers the following groups to help those in transition:

- **CHRIST IN CAREER SUPPORT GROUP***
Meets first and third Saturdays of the month from 8:30-10:30AM in Room 316
Contact: Jack Baloga at 952.944.5194
*A ministry of Christ Presbyterian Church
- **INDIVIDUAL MENTORING/COACHING***
Contact the CPC Lay Care office at 952.920.8515
*A ministry of Christ Presbyterian Church
- **MINNEAPOLIS JOB SUPPORT WORKSHOP**
Meets every Tuesday at 6:30PM
Contact: John Wetzel at john.wetzel@right.com
Visit www.mjsw.org
- **WOMEN'S NETWORKING GROUP**
Meets second Tuesday of the month at 6:30PM in the Parlor
Contact: John Wetzel at john.wetzel@right.com
Visit www.mjsw.org

Job Support Group at Lake Nokomis: The South Minneapolis Job Networking Group meets at Lake Nokomis Presbyterian on Fridays at 9am for support, resources and networking. For more information, please contact the congregation at (612) 721-4463.

Called to be a Faithful Minnesota: A Witness of Lament:

Minnesota people of faith are gathering at the Minnesota State Capitol for a witness of lament on the morning of Tuesday, June 30 from 10:00 - 11:30 am to beg Governor Tim Pawlenty not to abandon the health of Minnesota's citizens, especially those most in need. The rally is being organized by the Minnesota Council of Churches in cooperation with many other organizations and congregations.



Events Calendar

Summer Office Hours @ the Presbytery Office

Monday-Thursday:
8:30am-4:30pm

Friday:
8:30am-12:30pm

The Presbytery office will closed Friday, July 3 to observe the Independence Day Holiday.

At the end of the legislative session the governor vetoed funds for health insurance for 30,000 extremely vulnerable Minnesotans. Now his unallotment plan accelerates these health care cuts by two months. He also plans to unallot emergency assistance and services to children, families and people with disabilities.

As people of faith we want to send the message that this is not the Minnesota we are called to be. It is against the teachings of all our religious traditions. We want to remind Governor Pawlenty that he is governor of all the people and plead for his care for all.

Join us for this rally:

Gather at Christ Lutheran Church on Capitol Hill, 105 University Avenue, St. Paul, by 10:15 am. We will stage in congregational groups and process in a somber, funeral-like procession beginning at 10:30 am. Please wear black and bring old flowers and notes to the governor expressing your faith-based concern about these budget decisions.

We will process down Martin Luther King Blvd, cross and gather on the South steps of the Capitol. Please deposit your flowers and cards in the baskets provided.

Speakers will include Bishop Peter Rogness, Saint Paul Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America; Rabbi Marcia Zimmerman, Temple Israel Minneapolis; and other faith leaders, as well as the Rev. Peg Chamberlin, Executive Director of the Minnesota Council of Churches and Rev. Grant Abbott, Executive Director of the Saint Paul Area Council of Churches.

A delegation will deliver the cards and letter to the Governor's office.

For More Information contact Gail Anderson, Minnesota Council of Churches at gail.anderson@mnchurches.org, or 612-230-3210.

Sponsored by the Minnesota Council of Churches

Caring for Persons with Mental Illness: Statistics suggest that 48 million Americans suffer from some type of diagnosed mental illness. More than likely, the odds favor that one or more of those 48 million will walk through the doors of your church or are already members of your congregation. How will you help them?

The National Associate for Mental Illness-Minnesota is sponsoring two educational events that are open to the

public. The July 21 sessions at St. Michael Lutheran Church in Bloomington are being hosted by the BeFriender Ministry National Office. For more information on "Ministry and the Mis-Wired Mind" go to <http://www.befrienderministry.org/mmwm.htm> or call 952-767-0244.

Synod School 2009: Synod School 2009, slated Sunday through Friday, July 26-31, at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa, will convene around the theme, "Building a Culture of Peace." Synod School is an educational ministry of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.

Synod School offers a welcoming and safe community for people of all ages and interest to learn, to grow spiritually, and to share in fellowship. Special programs for children and youth - infant through grade 12 - allow parents - grandparents, aunts and uncles and more - to attend classes with other adults, knowing that their children are in good care and having a great time.

Sara Lisherness, director of the Compassion, Peace and Justice Ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), will be the 2009 convocation speaker.

For more information as well as tools to promote the School, please go to the Synod website at: <http://www.lakesandprairies.org/school.html>.

Boundaries Training Available: This training is offered on three different dates in three different regions of Minnesota. All sessions are from 8:30am to 4:30pm. Lunch and materials are included.

- Thursday, October 8th 2009 - Fergus Falls, MN
- Thursday, October 22nd 2009 - Hinckley, MN
- Thursday, November 5th 2009 - Lakeville, MN

For more information or to register contact Aundrea Billings at aundrea.billings@mnchurches.org or 612-230-3236 or visit www.mnchurches.org.

[ConfMontreat.htm](#).

Worship and the Arts Conference: July 22-25, Louisville, KY. Sponsored by Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and the Office of Theology and Worship of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), this four-day event will offer pastors, worship leaders, liturgical artists, church members

Events Calendar

Next Presbytery Meeting:

Tuesday, July 14
Church of the
Master, Coon
Rapids, 4-8PM

Presbytery Packets
will be available in
early July. Go to
www.presbyterytwincities.org/presbyterypacket
to download materials.

and seminarians ideas and inspiration for creative approaches to worship planning and leadership. Through lectures, workshops with professional artists and creative worship experiences, participants will explore the biblical, liturgical and theological symbolism of borders in a variety of media: music, dance, drama, writing and visual arts. For more information and to register, please go to the Presbyterian Church (USA) Theology and Worship website, <http://www.pcusa.org/theologyandworship/events/worshiparts2009.htm>.

Congregational Mission Grants Available from Presbytery: Presbytery of Twin Cities Area has a long established tradition of supporting local mission initiatives. In the year 2008, Twelve churches and Four peace and justice requests for financial assistance, were benefited with grants coming from the former Connectional Ministries Work Group. This year the Mission and Witness Committee is currently evaluating received applications. And we are inviting Churches to send their grant request by **July 15**. Grant request forms are available on [PTCA website \(http://www.ptcaweb.org/COMM/mission.htm\)](http://www.ptcaweb.org/COMM/mission.htm).

Important News about the Bible Content Exam - The PC(USA)'s Bible Content Examination will now be administered **ONLINE ONLY**. The online Bible Content Examination is a proctored examination administered at seminary testing sites. Test takers will need a computer with internet access in order to take this examination. The examination will be available in English, Korean and Spanish. The exam will be offered twice each year beginning **October 2, 2009**. [Applicants must first read the instructions and explanatory material before visiting the new site](#) (www.pcusa.org/exams/bible.htm)

which allows for online registration and payment for the exam.

Synod Communicator Event Set for September: Communicators and anyone else who might want to attend are being invited to the second Synod-wide Communicators Conference Wednesday through Friday, Sept. 2-4, at the Hilton Garden Inn, Eagan, Minn. While several details remain to be ironed out, the conference will include sessions on social networking, writing for the Web, the Presbyterian News Service, Presbyterian Neighbor News and "Doing More (or At Least as Much) With Less." "We're going to do everything we can to keep the cost down," said Duane Sweep, associate for communications for the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. "We'd just like people to put a hold on those dates. More details should be available in a couple weeks."

A Conversation on the Future of Faith Communities: Saturday, September 19th, 2009, 9am - 3pm, Lake Nokomis Presbyterian Church, 1620 East 46th Street, Minneapolis MN 55407. Does the church have anything to say anymore to the big questions in people's lives? If so, what? How can the church be engaged with the questions: What is a lifetime? Why do we live it? We will learn about the loss of identity and loss of belonging that characterize so much of life today, and explore how the church might imagine hope and community with and alongside people. We'll talk about how the church can wrestle with questions, enter into suffering, and speak of hope in reality. We will hear from Andy Root (from his forthcoming book, "The Promise of Despair: The Way of the Cross as the Way of the Church"), and also get into some good theological conversation with one another - from many different churches and perspectives.

This is for church leaders, and for regular folks: **it is a day of theological conversation for everyone.**

Registration Including Lunch: \$20 (Lunch by Pepito's) **Registration is limited.** To register, call Jan at 612-721-4463. Download a flyer at www.ptcaweb.org/News/Root%20Event%20Flyer-4.pdf.

Dr. Andy Root is a theologian and professor of Youth & Family Ministry at Luther Seminary, St. Paul and the author of Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry, Relationships Unfiltered, and the forthcoming The Promise of Despair: The Way of the Cross as the Way of the Church.

Co-hosted by Randolph Heights Presbyterian Church, Edgcumbe Presbyterian Church, Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church, and Lake Nokomis Presbyterian Church.

Workshop on Mental Illness: The Disability Concerns Task Force is sponsoring a workshop called, **Mental Illness: A Challenge to our Churches**, September 19, from 9AM to Noon at Presbyterian Church of the Way in Shoreview. This workshop is open to Parish visitors, pastors, family members of persons who live with mental illness, deacons, elders, anyone who wants to understand mental illness and cares about ministry with the one in five who live with mental illness. To register, please contact more information and for childcare, please con-



Events Calendar

Presbytery @ Prayer

Monday-Friday
9:00am-9:30am

Please note that the staff of the PTCA gathers for morning prayer and devotions each day.

tact Rev. Bebe Baldwin at randbonmarquette@hotmail.com .

Church Growth webinars on Congregational Transformation: *Making Shifts without Making Waves* is the title of the next webinar on congregational transformation being offered by the Columbia Partnership with the sponsorship of the Office of Church Growth. For the first time during this pilot project the webinar will be offered on multiple days — Tuesday and Wednesday, July 21 and 22 at 2 p.m. EDT each day.

Each session will be identical and will have a limited registration of 75 seats. Presenters will be Eddie Hammett and tentatively Randy Pierce, who are co-authors of the forthcoming book *Making Shifts without Making Waves: A Coach Approach to Soulful Leadership* and also co-authors of the best selling *Reaching People Under 40 While Keeping People Over 60*.

The *Making Shifts without Making Waves* webinar will offer a coach approach to introducing and managing change in your church that will minimize the destructive waves that often come when change is mentioned.

Moving to multiple days will allow the webinar approach to make several changes. First, registration will be limited so that more dialogue can take place with the presenters through questions submitted by those in attendance. Second, the telephone and VOIP system will be used to allow participants to call in by telephone or to use a VOIP system through their computer.

To accomplish this, registrants will no longer be automatically approved for attendance, but will be manually approved to guarantee that registration will not exceed the reasonable limits of the Internet system being used. Currently only 15 seats remain for Tuesday, July 21. Seventy-five seats have been opened for Wednesday, July 22. If Wednesday fills up then a third session will be opened for Thursday, July 23.

To sign up for the seminars, please go to: www.pcusa.org/churchgrowth/webinar.htm.

Elder Commissioners Needed: One current Elder Commissioner and our Youth Advisory Delegate (age 17-23) to Synod from the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area have terms ending in January 2010. While each is eligible for re-election, additional applications will be accepted from elders, or prospective YADs who are active in local

churches or in presbytery and are interested in service in the wider church. [Application forms are available on the presbytery web site, ptcaweb.org](http://www.ptcaweb.org), or they can be requested from the presbytery office (email: office@ptcaweb.org).

- **Elder Commissioner to Synod** - 3 year term, beginning January 2010
- **Youth Advisory Delegate to Synod** - 1 year term, beginning January 2010

Applications, with a recommendation letter from a session, committee of presbytery, or minister member of presbytery, should be returned to the Nominating Committee by **August 1**. Election will be at the September presbytery meeting.

Synod meets 3 times a year, usually Sunday evening through Tuesday noon. Dates for 2010 are: January 17-19, May 2-4, and October 3-5. Meetings will be at the Mt.Olivet Retreat Center in Farmington. Expenses for travel, room, and board are born by the Synod.

The Nominating Committee will nominate one person for each position and include a brief biographical sketch outlining the nominee's qualifications, service, and commitment to serve. For each person nominated from the floor, the Nominating Committee requires that similar information be published in quantities sufficient for distribution at the presbytery meeting when elections will occur.

All commissioners and YADs are expected to serve on one standing committee, which meet during the Synod meetings. These include Ecclesiastical Relations Committee, Finance Committee, Personnel Committee, Program Coordination Committee. There are a few Special Committees which meet separately, and a few commissioners are invited to serve on one of these if they so desire: Committee on Congregational Development, Committee on Racial Ethnic Ministry, Communication and Interpretation Committee, Synod School Committee.

Oak Grove Sorg Sentrum



By Rev. Dries Coetzee

Editor's note: The following is a blog entry by Dries Coetzee, the Associate Pastor at Oak Grove Presbyterian Church in Bloomington. Dries is on a three-month sabbatical and he along with his wife Beth and their two children, Alazar and Endalkachew, spend time in his native South Africa.

What a satisfying feeling it was to visit the nearly completed "Oak Grove Sorg Sentrum" (Oak Grove Care Centre). It was such a surprise to see that our partners at the Silwerjare Community Centre named this new expansion after Oak Grove Presbyterian Church to acknowledge our partnership with them. Oak Grove's relationship with Silwerjare Community Centre started six years ago when my parents, Dalene and Klaas Coetzee served a South African meal at Oak Grove Presbyterian Church in Bloomington, MN to raise money towards the project. As part of Oak Grove's 2005 & 2007 study trips to South Africa, twenty five of our members formed relationships with the Blompark community, getting to know each other better through eating, visiting, and worshipping together. We all returned with a deep desire to be in solidarity with the people of Blompark.

The Silwerjare Service Centre started out several years ago when two women in the neighborhood realized needs in their community then did something about it. Their ministry started with tea for the elderly at the home of a woman named Magrieta Adams. Shortly after, they provided a nutritious meal once a month, then twice a month. With only R16000 (\$2600) in the bank, their mission of faith grew to include the building of a R200,000 (\$33,300) community center. Here, elderly in need would receive a nutritious meal each day for R2.30 (\$0.40) and have access to bathing facilities. By the time the building was com-

pleted, all necessary funds had been raised.

The vision of this community center, however, keeps growing! With the help of Oak Grove Presbyterian Church, the center has now expanded to include eight rooms (2 people per room) designated for assisted living and convalescent care for the elderly and HIV patients, storage rooms, and office space. We are looking forward to opening the new "Oak Grove Sorg Sentrum" in October of this year when another group of Oak Grovers will visit South Africa.

Most amazing about this project is how people can make a difference in each other's lives when we realize our dependence on one another and work together. The satisfaction that comes from the knowledge that we are making a difference in the lives of those underserved is indescribable, as it brings wholeness to all our lives. One elderly or AIDS patient getting the care they deserve restores dignity in all of us, as our lives are woven together, bonded in one human family.

You can follow Dries; journey is home country by going to his blog, "There is No Wall" at dries-coetzee.wordpress.com/.

"Most amazing about this project is how people can make a difference in each other's lives when we realize our dependence on one another and work together. "

-Rev. Dries Coetzee, Associate Pastor, Oak Grove Presbyterian,

Picture Above: Dries Coetzee with sons Alazar and Endalkachew pose in front of Oak Grove Sorg Sentrum in Blompark, South Africa.

“A Peaceful Presence”



By David Colby

Editor's Note: The following is by David Colby, pastor of Central Presbyterian Church in St. Paul. It's a sermon given on April 26, 2009. The Bible text for the sermon was from Luke 24:36b-48. The sermon has been edited for content.

Central is now on Facebook. For those not in the loop, Facebook is a social networking website where you can (to use a noun as a verb) “friend” people. It’s a great way to stay in touch with friends in real life through posting pictures and giving brief status updates.

There is a popular preacher in Seattle who uses cutting-edge technology in his sermons. He is, to use a play on words, a bit of a genre-bending preacher – an extremely theologically conservative guy who dresses in grunge and uses R-rated sermon titles. In recent sermons he has asked the congregation to take out their iPhones and twitter away to their friends during the sermon. I have no plans to ask you to do that any time soon! But I do want to talk for a minute about Facebook – hang with me for a minute or two!

Facebook facilitates the sudden reappearance of long-lost friends. Close friends from high school I haven’t communicated with in twenty years suddenly show up on my screen. Some look just like they did as seventeen year olds. Others are barely recognizable. The thing is – and the connection to our gospel reading – is to think about how our identity is impacted by the reappearance of old friends.

I did have one awful experience on Facebook when I discovered the death of an acquaintance. I saw comments from others saying they would deeply miss him and only then did I learn that he had died. More than two months later, people were still writing messages to him. One wrote a note that began, “Thought of you today, John,” and ended with, “Hope you are having a blast in the afterlife, old friend.” Part of me wondered if people hoped beyond hope that suddenly they might get a reply back from him. Facebook – where friends suddenly reappear, acquaintances die without leaving a final message and status updates can be confusing to follow. Life on Facebook is unpredictable.

In the Bible, we hear of a similarly unpredictable world in those days immediately following the first Easter. Jesus has died, disappeared from view. Then come reports that he has reappeared whispered from one friend to another. The gospels record a number of resurrection appearances of Jesus. Gary Wills writes that there is “an elusive or uncanny aspect to” these gospel resurrection encounters.

They often do not at first recognize Jesus. He seems paradoxically physical (eating food) yet ghostly (gliding through a door), ordinary (a gardener, a traveler) yet transfigured. Paul, who knows what he is talking about, says that the risen body does not fit any of our expectations.

Even in his presence, the disciples express doubt and disbelief and question his identity. There is usually a “told you so,” moment in which an explanation is given that they should have expected his return, and then Jesus is again gone from their sight.

Each time, the reappearance seems to repeat the suddenness of Easter morning and the fleeting nature of certainty.

That’s how it is with our story today from the Gospel of Luke. It’s actually the third resurrection appearance narrated in quick order. Gathered in Jerusalem all in one place is a whole group of close followers of Jesus: the twelve disciples minus Judas; two who just met the risen Jesus on the road to Emmaus and have returned to Jerusalem, the women who had gone to the tomb early that Easter morning, and assorted others. There they were, gathered together, talking about their feelings and these wild reports from the day.

And as they are talking, Luke tells us, “Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost” (Luke 24:36-37). No longer just stories of surprising reappearances, Jesus is suddenly there among them and they are startled and terrified.

“He (Jesus) does not use his wounds as a rallying cry. There will be no eye for an eye, hand for a hand, foot for a foot. Not Jesus. His wounds serve as identifying characteristics and his words say, ‘peace be with you.’ ”

**-Rev. David Colby,
Pastor, Central
Presbyterian
Church.**



“A Peaceful Presence” Continued



“The renewed work of this risen Jesus is not to respond to suffering with violence, but to be involved in speaking and creating peace.”

**-Rev. David Colby,
Central Presbyterian Church, St. Paul.**

I get the startled. But why were they terrified? I wonder what it was that they had been talking about before being interrupted by the very presence of Jesus.

Obviously they had been sharing the reports of the empty tomb and Jesus appearing to Peter and to the two on the road to Emmaus. Had they been trying to convince themselves the earlier appearances had been some cruel trick of positive thinking – or had they believed the reports and been wondering what this resurrection meant? Did they worry that Jesus might come back mad at them for deserting them? Did they wonder if the resurrection meant that now that death had been defeated Jesus would lead a new band of folks unafraid of martyrdom to once and for all overthrow the Romans and any who had collaborated with their rule? Why were they terrified?

Now that Jesus has been raised from the dead, there is indeed more work to be done in his name. And there are, I believe, at least two clues in this passage as to what that work is for those who will continue to follow in his name. The first clue is in his greeting, “peace be with you.” I assume that the marks of violence have taken its toll even on his resurrected body. “Look at my hands and my feet,” he says to them. He does not use his wounds as a rallying cry. There will be no eye for an eye, hand for a hand, foot for a foot. Not Jesus. His wounds serve as identifying characteristics and his words say, “peace be with you.” His resurrection appearance begins as a peaceful presence, even to those who are startled and terrified. “Could it be” Gregory Jones suggests, “that gentle grace is more important and powerful than violence?”³

The renewed work of this risen Jesus is not to respond to suffering with violence, but to be involved in speaking and creating peace. The Hebrew word he would have used, shalom, means health, welfare, wholeness – we translate that word as peace.

“Peace be with you,” he said to those startled and terrified disciples.

I think about that greeting when I reflect now months later on our ministry during those late summer days of the Republican National Convention. Surrounded by people of passion on all sides. Placed right in the thick of things, where some were

spoiling for a fight and others tried to demonstrate that might would be right, we offered water and sanctuary and proclaimed this to be a peaceful presence. We offered some breathing room, away from polarized partisanship. In this peaceful presence, we remembered that the primary identity of those we encountered were not Republicans or Democrats, nor police or protesters – the primary identity of those we encountered were people – people created and called by God. Jesus’ greeting was and is our greeting – “peace be with you.”

The second clue about the continuing purpose of work is found in Jesus’ summary of what he had told them while he had been still with them and his interpretation of scriptures. “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (Luke 24:46-47). That is, in effect, the “so what” of his rising from the dead on the third day, according to this passage.

The risen Jesus will not lead a coup against the Romans or the temple authorities. The risen Jesus will not seek revenge or punishment for those who had betrayed him. Instead, with his peaceful presence greeting them, he suggests a new way which is the fulfillment of his death and resurrection.

To repent – to turn around and go a different direction. To go in the ways of peace. That is, I believe, the new task for which these disciples, gathered together, are now called to do. To help create a new community of repentance and forgiveness of sins and deep abiding peace. But, like these resurrection stories, it would not be a linear or smooth process.

His reappearance reminded them of when they had first been called and meant that their identity could not be separated from their calling to be agents of his peace. With his reappearance, old hurts are forgiven and new beginnings are possible.



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"A Peaceful Presence", Continued

Cynthia Gano Lindner, writing about this passage compares the way we narrate the resurrection to the way new parents narrate the birth of a child. And it is with her words that I conclude.

Two thousand years after Christ's crucifixion, when our violence toward one another has not abated, a collapsing economy exposes the depths and dangers of our own commodification, and our churches doubt their inheritance and their power, we may determine that we are still beyond resurrection's reach... Luke's Gospel points out that it's precisely when we've pronounced hope dead and prepared the spices for burial that the birth pangs announcing new life are likely to commence.

We make pilgrimage to the tomb of some long-dead dream or desire, only to be surprised by the contractions of resurrection: hope still stirs. We glance up from our daily commute and our eyes meet the eyes of a stranger who nods in a moment of holy recognition: the birth pangs of resurrection, once again. We clasp the weathered hand of an aging loved one or playfully count the toes of a toddler; our hearts break and our hands open when we hear that oh-so-human and oh-so-divine request, "Do you have anything to eat?" We break bread around cafeteria tables, communion tables – and our minds are opened to understand ourselves and our place in the world yet again. We are, all of us, children and heirs of the resurrection – which is God's affirmation that creation matters, that love and justice matter, that humanity, in all of its ambiguity and complexity, is still fearfully and wonderfully God-made. We are evidence of Christ's continuing in-breaking, of the resurrection which was and is and is to come. 4 May it be so. Amen.

1 Molly Worthen, "Who Would Jesus Smack Down," The New York Times Magazine 6 January, 2009. 2 Garry Wills, What Paul Meant (New York: Viking, 2006) 21. 3 L. Gregory Jones, "Faith Matters: Investing in Sudan" in Christian Century 21 April, 2009, 35. 4 Cynthia Gano Lindner, "Preaching the Word: Reflections on the Lectionary" in Christian Century 21 April, 2009, 20.

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