



EMerge

A Publication of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area

Volume Two, Issue Seventeen

August 15, 2008

Inside this issue:

- More on General Assembly
- Synod Dismisses Remedial case
- PC(USA) Stated Clerk Undergoes Surgery
- Board of Pensions Regional Rep Review
- Presbytery Events
- Presbyterian World Mission Seeks Candidates
- Welcoming Autistic Children in Church

General Assembly Report in Brief

by Nancy Gritman
Stated Clerk, Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area

The following report was given by Stated Clerk Nancy Gritman at the July 8 Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.



"It is always a wonderful feeling to be with Presbyterian sisters and brothers from all across the country, plus the visiting ecumenical representatives from around the world."
-Stated Clerk, Nancy Gritman.

First, I would like to thank the Presbytery for the opportunity to attend General Assembly in San Jose, CA, the week before last. It is always a wonderful feeling to be with Presbyterian sisters and brothers from all across the country, plus the visiting ecumenical representatives from around the world. Many decisions were made at the Assembly, and I am attaching a brief report from the work of all of the committees.

I know you have heard and read much already, and more will be coming throughout the rest of the year. As a presbytery we will vote on the referred amendments to the Constitution in January, as well as study several items recommended for Presbytery study. Be sure to watch the website for news and information from the officers of the Presbytery and the commissioners to the General Assembly.

The Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow was elected Moderator of the 218th General Assembly, The Rev. Byron Wade was elected vice-Moderator, and The Rev. Grady Parsons was elected Stated Clerk.

03-GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES: GA approved the extension indefinitely the creation of non-geographic presbyteries such as Hanmi, which are created on the basis of language for immigrant communities. In response to a video on clergy sexual abuse, the PC(USA) is calling on presbyteries and synods to strengthen its response to sexual predation within the church.

A fund will be established to help presbyteries pay legal fees incurred as churches leave the denomination, to be supplied by voluntary donations to the Extra Commitment Opportunity account.

The Assembly approved the joint 2009 and 2010 budget proposals of the committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly council. The 2009 expenditure totals \$12,308,884, and for 2010 \$15,310,620. The per capita apportionment rises *Continued on Next Page*

General Assembly, continued

from \$5.79 to \$6.04 for 2009 and 2010.

04-CHURCH POLITY: The assembly voted by a margin of 540-161-3 to disapprove an overture to change the definition of marriage to include same-sex couples. After long debate, and the defeat of a substitute motion, the definition of marriage in the current Book of Order will stand, which defines marriage as “between a man and a woman”.

New members of churches, after examination by the session in which they affirm their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, will be asked to make a public profession of their faith in a service of worship.

A recommendation from the committee to approve urging civil rights for same-sex couples was approved by the assembly.

A commissioners’ resolution, passed by a vote of 519-157-8, urges a gracious, pastoral response to churches wanting to leave the denomination, rather than litigation.

05-CHURCH ORDERS AND MINISTRY: 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.”

In the same action, a new AI was issued declaring that interpretative statements related to sexual standards for ordination that predate the adoption of G-6.0106b in 1996 have no further force or effect.

G-14.0240 will be amended by the addition of the phrase *and readiness to assent to the constitutional questions for ordination and installation* which will be part of the examination to become elders or deacons.

G-14.0450 will be amended by the addition of the phrase *demonstration of readiness to assent to the constitutional questions for ordination and installation* as part of the final assessment of readiness to begin ordained ministry.

05-12 As recommended by John Knox Presbytery, an AI was approved by a 53% vote as follows:

“The 218th General Assembly (2008) affirms the authoritative interpretation of G-6.0108 approved by the 217th General Assembly (2006). Further, the 218th General Assembly (2008), pursuant to G-13.0112, interprets the requirements of G-6.0108 to apply equally to all ordination standards of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Section G-6.0108 requires examining bodies to give prayerful and careful consideration, on an individual, case-by-case basis, to any departure from an ordination standard in matters of belief or practice that a candidate may declare during examination. However, the examining body is not required to accept a departure from standards, and cannot excuse a candidate’s inability to perform the constitutional functions unique to his or her office such as administration of the sacraments).”

06-FORM OF GOVERNMENT REVISIONS: The proposed new form of government was sent to the Office of the General Assembly to be sent to the churches and presbyteries for study. In addition, a new task force was approved to include some of the previous task force and some from the GA committee to continue working on the document. The new revision is to be submitted to the stated clerk no later than Oct. 15, 2009 for distribution to the church at large by Jan. 15, 2010. Meanwhile, the new task force will take into account suggestions and revisions that are received from the churches and presbyteries.

07-ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH RELATIONS: The Assembly passed an amended overture that would have stated that Christians, Jews and Muslims all worship a common God with Abraham as

Continued on Next Page

General Assembly, continued

an expression of our common commitment to one God, stating instead that the three religions hold "differing understandings of how God has been revealed to humankind." Also passed were other overtures including support for A Common Word Between Us and You, an invitation to dialogue and cooperation from 138 Muslim clerics, commending it for study.

A Covenant Relationship Between the Korean Presbyterian Church of America and the PC(U.S.A.) will be sent to the presbyteries for ratification.

An Ecumenical Policy Statement affirming commitment to work with other ecclesial and mission bodies such as World Alliance of Reformed Churches, NCC, WCC was approved.

The Assembly approved the common agreement on baptism from the Catholic Reformed Bilateral dialogue.

07-13 Presbyteries may dismiss congregations to other ecclesiastical bodies of this denomination, and to denominations whose organization is conformed to the doctrines and order of the PC(U.S.A.). No congregation may be dismissed to independent status, or to the status of a non-denominational congregation.

Presbyteries may dismiss minister members to transitional presbyteries of the Evangelical Presbyterian church under G-15.0202 with certain provisions.

08-MISSION COORDINATION AND BUDGETS:

08-01 Reinstatement of the Mission Season Offering during mission season as a fifth special offering was rejected. Changing the name of the GAC to the General Assembly Mission Council was approved.

Adding a representative from the National Council of Presbyterian men to the GAC with voice and vote was approved. Several new review procedures were approved to be put into action by the GAMC.

09-SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES:

A new social creed, the first in 100 years, was adopted which speaks to the 21st century and the social issues of the times. Several other resolutions were passed dealing with studying ways to correct social injustices.

10-HEALTH ISSUES:

10-01 A comprehensive HIV and AIDS policy will be developed by the ACSWP.

10-03 PC(U.S.A.) entities are directed to redevelop congregational resource materials on the subject of reproductive options, to more adequately reflect the full spectrum of biblical, theological, and pastoral counsel, advocating both sides of the abortion policy. Including the decision to not have an abortion.

10-05 A new comprehensive policy on serious mental illness was adopted.

10-06 Assembly endorsed in principle the provision of single-payer universal health care reform in which health care services are privately provided and publicly financed. Advocacy for the best response to the moral imperative of the gospel, with progress to be reported back to the next 2 GA's was approved.

11-PEACEMAKING AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES: Assembly called for responsible ending of the Iraq conflict, and supporting human rights in areas of the world where violations are evident.

A resolution affirming the obligation of the church to speak out on issues of peace in Israel and Palestine as well as develop instructional materials as necessary was approved.

The Assembly called on the government of Iraq to step up in providing security, peacekeeping forces and funding the rebuilding of its own country.

The overture from PTCA was passed as part of the consent agenda, along with several overtures advocating justice and peacemaking.

There were no additional overtures dealing with divestment.

Continued on Next Page

General Assembly, continued

12-CHURCH GROWTH AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: Assembly, after much debate, approved the development of adolescent human development resources, which will explore all facets of adolescent development, including human sexuality.

The assembly also approved the GAC's program to "Grow God's Church – Deep and Wide."

13-THEOLOGICAL ISSUES AND INSTITUTIONS: The Assembly voted, by a vote of 436-380-11, to initiate the process to revise the Heidelberg Confession. The current Book of Confessions contains a translation from 1962. There are portions of this translation which were not thoroughly checked, and have since been questioned. The work will be directed toward a translation more accurate and faithful to the original German language.

13-07 An overture to study the Belhar Confession for inclusion in the Book of Confessions was approved.

13-13 Churches and presbyteries are encouraged to study the Trinity using material prepared by the Office of Theology and Worship.

14-REVIEW OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY PERMANENT COMMITTEES Recommendations for some changes in the timing of ordination exams, as recommended by the Committee, were approved to be sent to the presbyteries for their vote. The proposed amended item for the Book of Order is G-14.0431. Also, several recommendations to the GAPJC, the Advisory committee on Racial Concerns, and the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examination of Candidates were proposed. The committee stressed that their assignment was to review process, not content.

15-PENSIONS, FOUNDATION, AND PRESBYTERIAN PUBLISHING CORPORATION: 15-01 The Assembly urges the Board of Pensions to expand its medical coverage for children with congenital development disabilities.

15-02 An annual reporting from the Board of pensions on the Relief of Conscience Plan, which segregates medical plan dues paid by employing organizations conscientiously opposed to abortion to guarantee that those dues are not spent on abortion procedures.

16-WORSHIP AND SPIRITUAL RENEWAL: The Assembly voted to request the Moderator of the 218th General Assembly to say before every vote "As sisters and brothers in Christ, sharing our common faith in, and allegiance to, Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, let us proceed to vote on the question before us."

The Assembly voted to approve a recommendation that "each congregation and presbytery gather in times each sets aside for spiritual renewal through intentional gatherings such as spiritual assemblies, which may include personal and community worship, meditation, confession, forgiveness, fasting and prayer."

17-YOUTH: The Assembly approved providing each presbytery's resource center with a Lilly Foundation funded DVD, Soul Searching: A Movie About Teenagers and God.

Also, the Assembly affirmed the need for more mentoring between youth and adults.

A task force is appointed to seek input from youth, to find and present model programs, focusing on the needs of youth and report back to the 219th General Assembly.

Another action changes the designation of YAD (Youth Advisory Delegate) to YAAD (Young Adult Advisory Delegate).

Synod of Lakes and Prairies Permanent Judicial Commission Dismisses Case

By Duane Sweep
Synod of Lakes and Prairies

The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies Tuesday, Aug. 12, dismissed a remedial case filed against the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area that sought to nullify the presbytery's Jan. 26 action that restored the Rev. Paul Capetz, an openly gay man, to the exercise of ordained ministry.

The complainants, the Revs. David Bierschwale and David Lenz, and Elder Carol Shanholtzer, all members of the presbytery, asked the church court to "declare as irregular" the presbytery's "action of determining that a declared departure from the [Book of Order's] G-6.0106b does not constitute a failure to adhere to the essentials of the Reformed faith and polity under G-6.0108."

The complainants also asked the court to "invalidate any related actions taken" as a result of the restoration. Finally, the complainants also sought to have the presbytery admonished and directed to "refrain from conducting further irregular" action.

Noting the decision of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission in *Bush, et al. v. Presbytery of Pittsburg* in February 2008 that departures from the fidelity and chastity requirement found in G-6.0106b are not permitted, the synod's PJC found that ruling did not apply because it dealt with "ordination" while the current case involved the "reinstatement of a pastor already ordained."

The commission cited *Wier v. Second Presbyterian Church*, a 1999 case of the General Assembly PJC, that noted, "The ordaining and installing governing body is in the best position to determine whether self-acknowledgement is plain, palpable, and obvious, based on its knowledge of the life and character of the candidate."

In dismissing the case, the synod's PJC noted the Book of Order's G-6.0108b "is a foundational argument." That paragraph places the ultimate responsibility for determining "whether a person has departed from essentials of Reformed faith and polity" on the governing body in which the person serves.

The synod's PJC also wrote, "The only acceptable method of denying Dr. Capetz the full rights and privileges of exercise of the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament would be by disciplinary action of the presbytery."

Download the Portuguese youth curriculum

Nos Acreditamos: Palavra de Deus para as Pessoas de Deus para jovens é um curriculum da Igreja Presbiteriana (E.U.A.) e o mais novo membro da família de *We Believe* e *Así Creemos*. Ensina as verdades bíblicas aos/às jovens usando a Bíblia e os documentos confessionais da igreja. O livro do professor inclui as características de cada grupo de idade, um guia para professores/as substitutos/as e tudo o que você precisa para poder dar uma aula completa e interessante aos seus estudantes. Os materiais estão fundamentados na nossa fé e tradição reformada e toma em conta teorias de ensino como as de inteligência múltiplas e a de educação cooperativa. Estes materiais se oferecem de maneira gratuita para o uso de nossas congregações e missões de fala portuguesa. Esperamos que sejam úteis para o seu ministério de levar a palavra a nossos jovens.



Nos Acreditamos: Palavra de Deus para as Pessoas de Deus for youth is the curriculum of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the newest member of the "We Believe" and "Así Creemos" families. It teaches youth about biblical truths using the Bible and the confessional documents of the Church. The teacher's book includes the characteristics of each group by age, a guide for substitute teachers and all you need to offer a complete and interesting class to your students. The materials are solidly based on our Reformed faith and tradition, and take into consideration learning theories like multiple intelligences and cooperative education. These materials are offered free of charge to our Portuguese language congregations and fellowships. We hope they are useful in your ministry for reaching out to our young people.

You can download the curriculum by going to: www.pcusa.org/espanol/portuguese.htm

Christians at war

Statement by the Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnamon, General Secretary, National Council of Churches USA

New York, August 13, 2008 -- Russia's attack on Georgia is a disheartening reminder that the 21st century remains a primitive age of fanatical nationalism and military bullying.

Even more distressing is the fact that both Russia and Georgia are Christian nations with ancient church roots. Church leaders and laity in both nations have courageously borne witness to the Gospel of Christ in the halls of political power, but their words have gone unheeded.

Political leaders in Russia and Georgia -- indeed in many other nations including our own -- seek to justify military interventions on the grounds of national interest or public security. In general the churches of Christ reject such puerile political rationalizations.

The [Orthodox Peace Fellowship](#) has been particularly clear in condemning the conflict in Georgia as "a sin and a scandal."

Orthodox Christians and all of the [35 diverse traditions that compose the National Council of Churches](#) testify that our Creator is a God of love who came to us in human form to save us from destruction, calling on us to love God and one another. The military intervention in Georgia, like all actions born of hatred or callous self-interest, is an act of madness, a senseless rejection of God's love and salvation.

This commitment to peace with justice is a basic tenet of the churches' movement toward visible unity. The delegates to the World Council of Churches' founding assembly in Amsterdam in 1948 put it succinctly: "War is contrary to the will of God." War may at times be a necessary evil, but it is *inherently evil*. Christians must never identify violence against others with the will of God or countenance such rhetoric when used by their governments. God's purpose is shalom. We do not go to war in the name of God.

We welcome signs that the conflict in Georgia is ebbing, but we note that the underlying causes of nationalism and ethnocentrism -- corruptions of the Gospel of Christ -- remain in place. It is deeply disturbing to note that the brutality in Georgia is part of a world-wide trend. Every day we hear reports of military intervention and violence in the Philippines, in Sri Lanka, in Sudan and Darfur, in Zimbabwe and elsewhere. There is also considerable suffering in Afghanistan and Iraq, although our media's preoccupation with those conflicts distracts us from suffering in other nations. ...

We pray out of a knowledge that the suffering in war can never be understood by those who have not experienced it -- the nauseating, incapacitating fear, the horror of seeing loved ones dismembered and dying, the suffocating stench in the aftermath of battle. We pray for all who suffer in times of armed conflict, especially the young, the old, the innocent bystanders. We pray for those who put on their country's uniform and trust that the jobs they are sent to do are necessary and just.

We also pray for the discernment and courage of church and religious leaders and persons of faith in nations that struggling with these issues. We pray for political leaders throughout the world, that they may hear God's still but persistent voice when they face difficult decisions for the welfare of their nation. We pray for a time when military intervention is no longer considered a reasonable solution to political problems, and when those who decide to go to war are regarded as criminally unbalanced.

We pray for a peace that is more than an absence of war. We pray for a peace that is founded on God's love and built on our love for one another. We pray for a peace that stills the turbulence in our souls. We pray for the peace that passes all understanding.

Michael Kinnamon
General Secretary
National Council of Churches

The stuff God is putting together

A monthly column for the church by the stated clerk

by the Rev. Gradye Parsons

Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

LOUISVILLE — One of my favorite books is *How Buildings Learn*, by Stewart Brand. It is a book about what happens to buildings after they are built.

We tend to look at buildings as static objects with a utilitarian future. Brand argues that good buildings are those that adapt to new uses, different inhabitants, and changing customs. Buildings that can adapt and are indigenous to the local culture usually survive and thrive.

Brand gives particular praise to structures built during the 1930s by the New Deal programs — Civilian Conservation Corps, Public Works Administration, and Works Project Agency. These programs provided work for millions of people who had lost their income during the Depression. They found help and hope while constructing some of our favorite structures.

In Ephesians 2, Paul uses a building metaphor to describe the way God is constructing the church. It is built on a foundation of the saints and apostles, with Christ as the cornerstone.

This construction of God's has two great goals. One is to transform you and me from strangers and aliens into members of God's household. The second is for the whole structure to grow together into a holy temple in the Lord, a dwelling place for God.

The church that God is building is not a specific structure. Most of the time it is not even visible. Sometimes we get a glimpse when we see bread broken, a cup of water offered, or an eight- or eighty-year-old face light up. But, seen or unseen, we should never doubt that this church is being built and that we are the materials.

We are the stuff God is putting *together* to build God's church.

The *Book of Occasional Services* [Geneva Press, 1999] includes liturgy for the groundbreaking of a church. One of the prayers offers this hope:

Eternal God, our days and years are in your hand. Our accomplishments are fleeting, and what we build is temporary. We pray that what we begin here today will rise to give you glory, standing firm on the foundations of apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ himself as the cornerstone.

Gradye Parsons undergoes successful heart surgery

by [Jerry L. Van Marter](#)
Presbyterian News Service



Gradye Parsons.

CLEVELAND — The Rev. Gradye Parsons, stated clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), underwent successful open heart surgery on Aug. 7 at the Cleveland Clinic here.

The surgery — to repair an aortic aneurysm that was first diagnosed several years ago but which had worsened in recent months — took five hours.

Parsons is scheduled to remain hospitalized for five to seven days and then return to his home in Louisville to recuperate for the remainder of August.

Messages can be sent by email to gradye.parsons@pcusa.org.

We Are Family

A monthly column for the church by the moderator

by the Reverend Bruce Reyes-Chow

Moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)



“In the midst of all the many folks who are faithfully discerning their place in this denomination, we must remember that we are family, joined first by common belief in the salvific nature of Jesus Christ, and then by affiliations — affinity and, yes, by denomination. ”

-Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow

SAN FRANCISCO — In just a few weeks since the end of the 218th General Assembly, it is safe to say that serving as Moderator has already been an incredibly meaningful experience. What a privilege to be in a place to listen to the passionate voices of this community, our church family. Through “Town Halls” online communities and personal interactions, the complex nature of our church has been made very real to me.

As I have listened to the voices that have shared, whispered, and shouted in my direction, it is clear that a great many realities exist in our church. A number of indi-

viduals and communities are filled with pain, frustration, anger, sadness, resignation, and righteous indignation over GA actions.

In the midst of all the many folks who are faithfully discerning their place in this denomination, we must remember that we are family, joined first by common belief in the salvific nature of Jesus Christ, and then by affiliations — affinity and, yes, by denomination.

For while there is great turmoil, make no mistake that there is also great hope and new life in our church — hope for who the PC(USA) might become, hope for followers of Christ to act as such, and hope that we as God’s creation can come together to fully manifest God’s hopes and intentions for the world and humanity.

Recently, I asked some folks about their greatest hopes for the church. Here is some of what they said:

“I can’t fit my hopes for the church in a sentence. All I know is I’m drawn to words like just, hospitable, truth, dialogue, faith, Spirit, collaboration and home. I also am passionate about youth finding their way into the fabric of church at the local level and on up” (Sarah Lamb, Des Moines, IA).

“My hope for the church is that we would pray together more. Not praying for anything, but praying to be in relationship with God. I think everyone in the church, and certainly every congregation and group, and the church as a whole, could use some time together, being community with God” (Hannah Nutt, New Concord, OH).

Like any family, there will be ebbs and flows in how we interact. Sometimes, it will be rough and we will wish we were no longer related; other times, we will defend one another like only family members can. When we are at our most faithful, we will hope more than we could ever imagine that the other will grow fully into who God hopes that person to become. I firmly believe that God hopes for us to be, above all, faithful. This is also my hope for each and every one of us. I hope it is yours as well.

Please join the many conversations taking place at Bruce’s Moderator blog, www.mod.reyes-chow.com.

Regional Rep Review: August 2008

By The Rev. Dr. Douglas Kelly
Regional Representative-The Synods of Mid-America, Lincoln Trails and Lakes and Prairies
Presbyterian Board of Pensions

Preparing for the final 403(b) regulations



Contact Info:
Rev. Doug Kelley
 Phone: 800-773-7752, ext. 7045
 Email: dkelly@pensions.org

New IRS regulations for Section 403(b) plans take effect on January 1, 2009. To maintain the tax-qualified status of their 403(b) plans, sponsors and employers must ensure that their plan documents and administration are in compliance with these new regulations by this date. The Retirement Savings Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), sponsored by the Board of Pensions, is a 403(b)(9) retirement income account church plan, and is governed by the new regulations.

Some employing organizations and churches offer their employees the opportunity to participate in multiple 403(b) plans. Under the new regulations, such employers are responsible for assuring that all of those plans are in compliance with the new regulations by January 1. Employers may want to consider consolidating their plan offerings in 2008 to simplify their compliance obligations under the new regulations.

For more information about the new role of churches and employing organizations, the revised eligibility requirements for the Retirement Savings Plan, and a new Adoption Agreement for employing organizations and churches offering the Retirement Savings Plan, please visit Pensions.org.

Summer Issue of The Board Bulletin Available

The Board has published the summer issue of The Board Bulletin, which is available online and by mail by contacting the Board at 800-773-7752 (800-PRESPLAN). This issue covers key enhancements and changes to benefits made by the Board of Directors of the Board of Pensions during their July 19 meeting. Highlights include:

- Medical Plan Traditional Program dues will remain unchanged in 2009.
- Dues for the Affiliated Benefits Program will increase 7.8% in light of the specific claims experience of participating groups.
- The Optional Death Benefits program will be enhanced effective January 1, 2009. Enhancements include:
 - a reduction in Optional Death Benefits dues of 25%, on average
 - an increase in available coverage levels for all Benefits Plan members and their spouses
 - a change in name to the Supplemental Death Benefits program
- Three new benefits designed to promote Stewardship of Self were approved, effective January 1, 2009:
 - expanded preventive healthcare services for all active members and their spouses
 - financial counseling services for all active members
 - discounted fitness club memberships for all members, including retirees
- The amounts awarded for Transition-to-College Assistance Grants were increased from a range of \$250-\$750 to \$500-\$1,000. Applications are now being accepted.
- The requirement that employees work a minimum of 20 hours per week in order to be eligible to participate in the Retirement Savings Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will be eliminated, effective September 1, 2008.

Continued on Next Page

Review, continued

Increased Minimum and Maximum for Transition-to-College Assistance Grants Announced

The amounts awarded for Transition-to-College Assistance Grants, a pilot assistance program, have been increased from a range of \$250-\$750 to \$500-\$1000. (The amount is determined by the member's total family income.) The grants are intended to mitigate the one-time expenses incurred in students' freshman year.

Grant applications are now being accepted for students who will be freshman during the 2008-2009 academic year. Eligibility criteria relate to financial need, Plan participation, and enrollment of a dependent child as a full-time freshman in an accredited college or university.

More information about the Transition-to-College Assistance Grant program is available on Pensions.org.

Regional Benefits Consultation Presentations Posted

Recordings of the plenary sessions at the Regional Benefits Consultation are now available on Pensions.org. These easy-to-view Flash presentations enable members to gain insight into the Benefits Plan and investment updates from the Board of Pensions, as well as information from the General Assembly Council and the Office of the General Assembly, that were provided at the consultation.

Your Personal Annual Statement of Benefits is in the mail

Watch for Your Personal Annual Statement of Benefits, an individualized benefits statement published for active Benefits Plan members in booklet form by the Board of Pensions. Mailed in mid-July, Your Personal Annual Statement of Benefits shows you how the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) provides for you and your family. Through the Benefits Plan Traditional Program, members receive comprehensive pension, medical, death, and disability benefits, and, if elected, optional benefits as well.

Your personalized statement gives you a snapshot of your benefits as of January 1, 2008. The Board provides this information so that you can

Continued on Next Page

Christian Vocation Sunday is August 31, 2008



God's call is more than a job — daily service in the world through our jobs, talents and interests is a cornerstone of our lives as Christians. Plan a special worship service in your congregation August 31, 2008, with resources from the office of Christian Vocation. Go to www.pcusa.org/christianvocation/christianvocationsunday.htm for more information.

Review, continued

- check the accuracy of your personal information on file with the Board of Pensions
- review benefit coverage levels with your family
- assess your overall financial picture
- plan for your retirement

If you don't receive your statement by early August, please notify the Board of Pensions at 800-773-7752 (800-PRESPLAN).

2009 median salaries, minimums, and maximums reported

Each year, the Board uses current effective salary data to calculate the median effective salaries needed for dues billing and benefit determinations the following year. Based on the information reported to the Board of Pensions as of May 1, 2008, the median effective salaries for 2009 are:

Employment Classification	Median Salaries		% Change in Median
	2009	2008	2009 from 2008
Pastors' Median*	\$50,800	\$49,000	+ 3.7%
Exempt Lay Members	\$37,600	\$36,300	+ 3.6%
Non Exempt Lay Members	\$27,600	\$26,800	+ 3.0%

*Although the figures used to calculate the pastors' median include only ordained minister members serving churches, the median applies to all ordained minister members for determining benefits based on effective salary: pension credit accruals, disability benefits, and death benefits.

The pastors' median is also used to determine the minimum salary participation bases for benefit dues and the maximum salary on which healthcare dues are based.

Dues minimums and maximums

The minimum salary participation basis for healthcare dues in 2009 is \$33,020; this is 65% of the pastors' median. The maximum is \$101,600, or 200% of the pastors' median.

The minimum salary participation basis for pension and death and disability in 2009 is \$12,700; this is 25% of the pastors' median. For 2008, Federal law set the maximum pension participation basis at \$230,000. The cap for 2009 has not yet been determined.

Minimum salary requirement

In order to be eligible for enrollment and continued participation in the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), a church worker must receive a salary equal to 25% of the pastors' median, prorated for members working fewer than 35 hours a week. This minimum salary requirement is \$12,700 for 2009. For more information, please refer to Administrative Rule 305 in the Forms & Publications section of Pensions.org, or call 800-773-7752 (800-PRESPLAN).

Average salary information

Average salary information of minister members of the Benefits Plan who are serving U.S. congregations is published annually by the Board of Pensions in Salaries in the Parish Ministry. This summary report is now available at Pensions.org.

Continued on Next Page

Review, continued

E-learning expands on Pensions.org

Education is thriving at the Board of Pensions as we expand our e-learning opportunities with two new e-learning modules on community nature and effective salary. These e-learning modules and future webinars will enable the wider Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to understand many facets of the Benefits Plan, as well as provide follow-up learning options to our seminar participants.

The first module, *Community Nature: Caring for One Another*, explores the history and significance of the Benefits Plan's community nature and how it applies to Plan members and the Board's mission to support them.

The second module, *Effective Salary: Why It's So Important to Get It Right*, defines effective salary, explains how it is calculated, and demonstrates the impact underreporting effective salary has on Plan members.

In the coming months, look for more e-learning resources in the Educational Resources section of Pensions.org. You can also view our full complement of multimedia presentations under Forms & Publications.

Call for Clergy Colleague Group proposals

Clergy Colleague Groups are designed to help alleviate some of the isolation pastors encounter, providing them with a forum in which they can exchange ideas, garner support, and build relationships. Under the guidance of a group facilitator, pastors meet to constructively address issues of isolation, stress management, professional development, and mutual trust in a confidential setting.

Presbyteries are invited to submit a proposal for funding for a Clergy Colleague Group. The Board grants \$1,000, with the funding designated to cover 50% of the cost for pastors to meet 10 times a year. Applications are being accepted for new groups or existing groups that want to continue meeting for a second year.

Additional information, a brochure, and the application are available on Pensions.org. If you have any questions regarding the program or its requirements, you can contact Gwen Holmes, senior welfare benefits specialist, health and welfare plans, at gholmes@pensions.org.

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/presbytery_resources.html.

Presbytery and Churchwide Events

Seattle Peace Chorus @ Church of the Apostles – The Seattle Peace Chorus tours internationally and seeks to promote peace and justice through music and ideas. This concert is part of their summer Peace Train tour.

The 30 member chorus includes 10 local musicians as well as a brass quintet consisting of two trumpets, French horn, trombone, tuba; and an oboe, two drummers, piano and one timpanist with timpani.

Song genres include folk, spirituals, gospel and pop. Their major work is *Let America be American Again*, composed by Frederick West, based on a poem by Harlem Renaissance writer Langston Hughes. Dr. Lawrence Burnett, Carleton College Choral Director will be the featured baritone soloist.

Thursday, 6:30 to 8:15 p.m., August 28th

Presbyterian Church of the Apostles

**701 East 130th Street
Burnsville, MN 55337
952-890-7877**

There will be a freewill offering to help defray the cost of the soloist and musicians.

Co-sponsored by the Presbytery Peace and Justice Task Force, Macalester Plymouth United Church Peacemakers, Peace Presbyterian Church, Peace Prayer Group of Shepherd of the Lake Lutheran Church and Open Circle Church.

2008 PW/PTCA Fall Gathering-Villa Maria Conference Center, Frontenac, MN

(Handicapped accessible facility south of Red Wing on Hwy 61)

October 3 (Friday late afternoon) - **October 4** (Saturday afternoon)

“Christian Concerns about Creation”

Come explore ways to “save our creation for future generations” and experience Christian fellowship with other women in our Presbytery

in a peaceful setting among the fall colors of Southeastern Minnesota.

3 Options :

- Registration + Overnight stay + Breakfast and lunch on Saturday (single room) - \$90
- Registration + Overnight stay + breakfast and lunch on Saturday (double room) - \$75 each
- Registration + breakfast and lunch on Saturday - \$33

*****Prizes awarded to churches with largest number of attendees*****

This is just an appetizer of what is to come. You will be receiving registration forms in the middle of August.

Registration Deadline – Friday, September 19. (Money and registra-

tions due—no late registrations!)

Questions can be addressed to Margie Petersen (507-843-4649) or Rosey Peterson (507-477-3140)

Academy for Vital Christianity @ United- United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, in partnership with the Minnesota Conferences of the United Church of Christ and the United Methodist Church, is pleased to announce the inaugural year of our ACADEMY FOR VITAL CHRISTIANITY. The purpose of the academy is to energize and equip people to hear more profoundly the voice of God and to make that voice more audible in our neighborhoods, nation, and world.

Students in the Academy have the opportunity to learn to read the Bible in creative and eye-opening ways, draw on the wisdom of 2000 years to answer questions about God and life, expand skills for leadership in a congregation, and bring faith to bear on the great needs of the world.

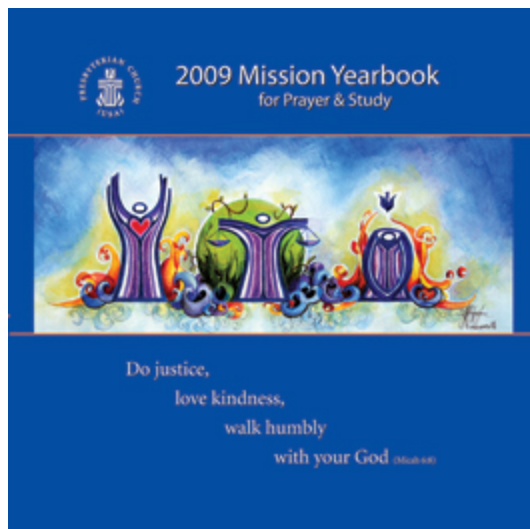
Fall classes begin September 2008. For more details or to register, go to www.unitedseminary.edu/ce/academy.asp or call 651.255.6138. You may register to take a class or earn a Certificate in Christian Studies. Evening and weekend classes available around the metro and in Rochester and Duluth.

Communicator’s Conference—Part of the mission of the Presbyterian Communicators Network is to connect with one another, provide training, share best practices and grow as communicators and Presbyterians. From the Midwest to the west, from now through October, the Communicators Network has slated two more regional conferences, including one that will serve communicators in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies at the Stronghold Conference Center in Oregon, Ill., Aug. 25-27. Some scholarships are available. To learn more about the conferences, check out the network’s spot on the Web site of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at <http://www.pcusa.org/comnet/>.

If you have an event you’d like to share, please send it to Dennis Sanders at communications@ptcaweb.org.

2008-09 Mission Yearbook of Prayer Orders

To all Presbytery of Twin Cities Area Churches:



The Mission Yearbook of Prayer and the Children's Mission Yearbook of Prayer will again be available for purchase through the Presbytery office at a substantial discount from the full individual retail price.

You are welcome to email your order to office@ptcaweb.org or download a form from the OPTCA website and return the form by fax to 612-871-0698 or mail to PTCA – Mission Books, 122 W. Franklin Ave. #508, Minneapolis, MN 55404. Please be sure to list the exact number you wish to order, the name and location of your church and an email to notify you when the order arrives.

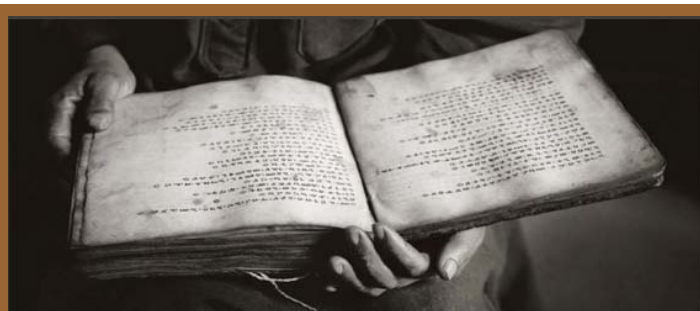
Please note: You may order as many as you wish.

When we have the final order, the price per copy will be posted on the web site. Please submit your order as soon as possible. No orders will be accepted after **August 25**. When the books arrive, you will be notified of your total cost – including shipping. **Please plan to come to the office to pick up your orders and pay for them at that time.**

The Mission Yearbook of Prayer and the Children's Mission Yearbook of Prayer offers a wealth of information, which may be used in a number of ways, such as, personal or corporate devotion, Minute for Mission, and stewardship interpretation. I look forward to hearing from everyone.

Faithfully,

Nancy E. Gritman
Stated Clerk



A Lived Life: Spirituality and Writing@ Hamline University



Students will immerse themselves in the writings of authors from various faiths

who merge the ongoing movements of the sacred in their lives with universal themes. Students will then try their hand at writing about their own spirituality through poetry and creative non fiction.

The courses are taught by Julie Neraas, a minister member of the Presbytery and other professors. For more information, please go to www.hamline.edu/gls/.

Presbytery Packets Available for Download

The Presbytery Packet for the July 2008 Stated Meeting is now available. The packet is no longer located at our old site, but has moved to what will soon be the [brand new website](http://www.presbyterytwincities.org) (www.presbyterytwincities.org) for the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area. This prototype website will give people a peek at what will be the future for our web presence.

To get to the Presbytery Packet, please go to www.presbyterytwincities.org and click on "Presbytery Packets." As has been the case in the past, not all the materials are online all at once. However, there is a way to be notified when the page is updated using Real Simple Syndication or  RSS. Simply look for the  RSS Symbol and click on it. This will take you to the RSS version of the prototype website. Click on where it says "subscribe to this feed." You will then have a "Feeds" link placed on your bookmarks, which will be updated every-time the page is updated.

Fall-term Weekend Courses at UTS

United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities

Announces 4 weekend classes for Fall Term 2008.

Each of these classes will meet on a Friday evening and Saturday morning, one weekend a month, beginning in September.

Justice, Liberation and Hope in the Theology of Paul (CH231)

Taught by the Rev. Neil Elliot, editor with Fortress Press and author of "Liberating Paul"

We will examine developments in recent scholarship that challenge the traditional picture of the apostle Paul. Specific topics include Paul's critical engagement with Roman slavery, the patronage system, and Roman imperial ideology; the problem of theology and praxis in Paul; Paul's relationships with emancipated persons in the assemblies, especially women prophets; the presence of subordinationist or "kyriarchal" themes in Paul's letters; and the challenge of interpreting Pauline texts rightly in the contemporary global context. **Class will meet on United's campus in New Brighton.**

Major 20th Century Moral Thinkers – Katie Geneva Cannon (TR552)

Taught by the Rev. Alike Galloway, organizing co-pastor of Kwanzaa Community Church in Minneapolis and working towards her doctorate at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia

This seminar is a close reading of selected works by Katie Geneva Cannon. Dr. Cannon was the first African-American woman ordained in the United Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); she focuses her work in the areas of Christian ethics, Womanist theology, and women in religion and society. **Class will meet at Kwanzaa Community Church, Minneapolis.**

Empowering Lay Leadership (CL541)

Taught by Dr. Jean Morris Trumbauer, Director of United's Doctor of Ministry Program

An emerging paradigm of church requires us to move beyond our view of members as "volunteers," or satisfaction with "maintaining church programs," and our reliance on "time and talent" forms to invite laity to ministry. Leaders of the church are challenged to re-envision the foundations and practice of sharing the ministry. This course explores a holistic approach to gifts-based ministry and the multiple components of a shared ministry system for today's congregations.

Class will meet at Pilgrim Congregational UCC in Duluth MN.

Reimagining the Church (TR820)

Taught by Dr. Eleazar Fernandez, professor of Constructive Theology at United

This is a course that introduces students to the classical as well as the various contemporary models of the church or ecclesiologies. Then these ecclesiologies will be critiqued in light of the tradition and contemporary challenges that the church is facing. Furthermore, students will engage in reconstructing or re-imagining an ecclesiology that is not only faithful to the Christian heritage but also responsive to the current context, both globally and locally.

Class will meet at the Carriage house of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Duluth MN.

For more information, contact United Seminary at www.unitedseminary.edu/admissions/index.asp.

Positions Available

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

- Youth Coordinator Assistant (Part-Time), Macalester-Plymouth United Church, St. Paul
- Director of Children's, Youth, Family Programming, St. Luke Presbyterian, Wayzata
- Music Director (Part-Time) - Valley Presbyterian, Golden Valley
- Nursery Attendant (Part-Time)- Trinity Presbyterian, Woodbury
- Director of Communications- Christ Presbyterian, Edina
- Organist (Part-Time)- Calvin Presbyterian, Long Lake
- Minister of Administration (Full-Time)- Dayton Avenue Presbyterian, St. Paul
- Music Director (Part-Time)- Stadium Village Presbyterian, Minneapolis
- Nursery Attendant- Plymouth Presbyterian, Plymouth
- Youth Coordinator- Presbyterian Church of the Way, Shoreview
- Part-Time Youth Director- Buffalo Presbyterian, Buffalo
- Director of High School and College Age Ministries- Westminster Presbyterian, Minneapolis
- Director of Children and Youth Ministry, Cherokee Park United Church, St. Paul (persons of color strongly encouraged to apply)

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 2008 Stated Meetings and Locations

- July 8, 2008, 4:00pm-8:30pm, Buffalo Presbyterian, Buffalo
- September 9, 2008, 4:00pm-8:30pm, First Presbyterian Church, White Bear Lake
- November 11, 2008, 4:00pm-8:30pm, Knox Presbyterian Church, Minneapolis

Please go to the PTCA website for more updates.

PTCA Churches Accepting PIFs

- Designated Pastor- Knox Presbyterian, St. Paul
- Solo Pastor- First Presbyterian, Claremont
- Pastor- First Presbyterian, White Bear Lake
- Pastor (NCD)-Chain of Lakes Presbyterian, Lino Lakes

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

Summer Hours for PTCA

Between Memorial Day and Labor Day, the PTCA office is open half-day on Fridays from 8:30am to 12:30pm.

2008 Self-Development of People Grants



The [Committee for the Self Development of People of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area](#) is pleased to announce their 2008 grant cycle. The committee is looking for grant proposals from organizations that are initiated by people in the Twin Cities Area, for people in the Twin Cities Area and controlled by people in the Twin Cities Area.

The Committee for the Self-Development of People is eager to establish partnerships with groups who are oppressed by poverty or social systems and want to take charge and decide what to do to create systemic change. The deadline for applications is October 15. For more information, please download the informational flyer available on the [Forms and Policies page](#) of the PTCA website or contact Rev. Joshua Heikkila, at 651-223-7549.

Christian Education Assistance Available for Congregations



Presbyterians Organized in Nurture and Teaching (POINT) is a network of educators who offer Christian education expertise and curriculum interpretation skills to churches in their area. These volunteers, appointed by each presbytery and equipped through the General Assembly Council, lead the way in assisting churches with their educational ministry.

How can a POINT representative help my church?

A member of the POINT network can visit with your Christian education committee to discuss existing programs and brainstorm new possibilities for ministry, including evaluating curricula to meet educational goals.

Who is my POINT network member?

The POINT network representative for the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area is Martha Rockenstein, Director of Christian Education at First Presbyterian Church in Hudson, WI. You can contact her by email at christianeducation@ptcaweb.org.

You can find out more about POINT, including resources by going to their website at www.pcusa.org/point/index.htm.

Help wanted

Presbyterian World Mission seeks candidates for international service

by Pat Cole

Associate for Mission Communications

LOUISVILLE – Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) mission leaders are asking the church to help them identify qualified candidates for international mission service.



"In order to recruit, train and sustain the ministries of our mission workers, we need the prayers and financial support of Presbyterian individuals and congregations."

-Hunter Farrell, director of Presbyterian World Mission.

"The General Assembly Council developed a budget, which in June was approved by the General Assembly, that enables the church to reverse a 50-year trend of decline in the number of mission co-workers serving internationally," says Hunter Farrell, the church's director of World Mission. "We are seeking to increase the number from fewer than 200 today to 215 in 2009 and 220 in 2010."

Currently, 18 mission positions are posted on the Mission Service Recruitment office's Web site (www.pcusa.org/msr/). They are scattered around the world and call for a variety of skills and gifts. "Both the World Mission staff and our international partners agree that all these positions meet critical needs," Farrell says. "Our partners have been requesting some of these positions for several years."

The church, however, lacks candidates for some positions and that is why World Mission is asking individual Presbyterians to consider their own call and giftedness for mission service and encourage others to do likewise, he adds.

"Many times people hear a call to service after somebody has affirmed their giftedness," Farrell says. "I would like Presbyterians to think about individuals who worship in the pew behind them on Sunday mornings, who serve on the congregation's Mission Committee with them, or who work with them on presbytery projects and in other areas of ministry."

Nancy Cavalcante, coordinator of the Mission Service Recruitment office, says her staff is looking first within the Presbyterian family, but that being Presbyterian is not a requirement for Presbyterian mission service.

"We are looking for called and committed Christians who possess the skills to perform the ministries requested by our partners," she says. "We invite Presbyterians to ask friends from other Christian traditions to apply. For many years non-Presbyterians have served faithfully and effectively in Presbyterian mission service."

Some of the openings include:

- A Christian educator/evangelist in the Democratic Republic of Congo
- An English teacher in Indonesia
- A health coordinator in Sudan
- A women's leadership facilitator in Guatemala

"In order to recruit, train and sustain the ministries of our mission workers, we need the prayers and financial support of Presbyterian individuals and congregations," Farrell says. He noted that an additional \$4 million must be raised over the next two years to fund this increase in mission personnel.

Presbyterians can be better informed about the work and needs of mission workers by visiting the Mission Connections Web site. Financial support can be given through a Web site (www.pcusa.org/mission) dedicated to receiving gifts for mission personnel salary and benefits. For more information about mission service, email the Mission Service Recruitment office (msr@pcusa.org) or call toll-free (888) 728 7228, x2530.

Gleanings from Congregations

- **Lake Nokomis Presbyterian** in Minneapolis has extended a call to Rev. Kara Root. The congregation voted on August 10 to call Root as their pastor. Root, who has been the Associate Minister at **Grace-Trinity Community Church** in Minneapolis, will start her ministry with Lake Nokomis on September 10.
- **Central Presbyterian** in downtown St. Paul is gearing up for the upcoming Republican National Convention, which will be held September 1-4 at the nearby Xcel Center. The church is hoping to have a ministry of presence during the convention and Pastor David Colby will help prepare the congregation with a two part sermon on faith and politics beginning August 17. (We hope to have a more detailed article in our next issue.)
- **St. Luke Presbyterian** in Wayzata is getting ready for their Homecoming Sunday on September 7. This event will kick off the 50th anniversary year of St. Luke. A slide show from the past 50 years will be shown during their learning time, followed by a celebratory service and wide angle photo of the entire congregation taken from the roof of the church, followed by a picnic.
- **Cherokee Park United Church** (a Presbyterian and United Church of Christ congregation), hired Dr. Herbert Perkins as their new Minister of Education and Outreach. He is currently a Masters of Divinity student at United Seminary in New Brighton.
- Rev. Chris Hagen will conclude his interim ministry at **Plymouth Presbyterian Church** in Plymouth on August 31. rev. T. Ewen Holmes begins his ministry as pastor of the congregation on September 1. Hagen is an ordained pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and has been interim pastor since early this year.
- If you are going to the Minnesota State Fair, you might want to consider parking at **Presbyterian Church of the Way** in Shoreview. Church of the Way's parking lot has been chosen as one of the "free" park and ride lots where fairgoers can catch busses to the Fairgrounds.

2008 Peacemaking Offering: Break the Bread of New Creation



2008 Peacemaking Offering

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

Sunday, October 5



Break the Bread of New Creation

The Peacemaking Offering was created in 1980 to support the efforts of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to live out a deeper commitment to peacemaking as part of our faithfulness to God. It is one of four special offerings designated by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s General Assembly.

Most churches receive the Offering on World Communion Sunday, the first Sunday in October, which this year is October 5. We encourage churches to use whatever Sunday works best for them.

Each congregation is encouraged to retain 25 percent of the Offering it receives to use for local ministries of peacemaking within the church and its community. Twenty-five percent is used by presbyteries and synods, and 50 percent is used by the General Assembly ministries through the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program.

To help your congregation effectively promote the Peacemaking offering, the PC(USA) has resources available. Go to www.pcusa.org/peacemakingoffering.

Churches try to meet needs of autistic kids

By Adelle M. Banks
Religion News Service

DAMASCUS, Md. -- On Sunday mornings at Damascus Road Community Church, when the children are dismissed from the sanctuary for Sunday school, another set of children and adults head to "The Haven."

As many as four dozen people gather in the church gym to play games and review a Scripture lesson on a sheet with fill-in-the-blank answers. It's a calm, structured atmosphere where no one seems to notice if a child is a little quiet, or if another



Participants in The Haven, a ministry for special needs adults and children, play a game earlier this year at Damascus Road Community Church in Damascus, Md. Religion News Service photo courtesy of Juli Feissner.

writes outside the blanks or a teen or adult hovers close to comfort or coach a participant.

"The Haven" is a ministry for members with developmental disabilities such as autism, Asperger's syndrome or other conditions that may make sitting through a typical church service difficult or impossible.

Created about 10 years ago by parents with special-needs kids, it's just one example of how religious institutions are trying to welcome families -- who otherwise might stay home -- into a faith setting that works for them and their children.

"It's better than everything else in my life," said Alec Carlson, 15, who has Asperger's and joined 10 other people on a multicolored mat

during the Scripture lesson.

Across the country, new programs and resources are being made available to families with special-needs children. LifeWay Christian Resources, a Southern Baptist entity, introduced a Bible study curriculum called "Special Buddies" last fall. Earlier this year, the National Catholic Partnership on Disability hosted an online seminar to offer strategies for catechism teachers to aid developmentally disabled children.

Professional experts who consult with Christian educators report increased interest in workshops, books and other materials that help them adapt their Sunday school classrooms for children with autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and other conditions.

Carlton McDaniel, a special-needs specialist with LifeWay, said attendance is up at sessions he conducts at annual Sunday school training conferences, and more churches are inviting him to speak.

"We're finding more families who are coming into our churches and saying, 'This is where the rest of my family wants to be, now what are you going to do for my child?'" he said. "In years past, a family would come in, find out there was nothing for their child and leave."

Even as parents speak up for their children and congregations try to reach out, some churches have said their sanctuary is not an appropriate setting for a special-needs child.

In Bertha, Minn., the Catholic Church of St. Joseph made accommodations for 13-year-old Adam Race for 12 years but obtained a restraining order against the teen, who is now 6 feet tall and weighs about 200 pounds, when safety became a concern. Adam was accused of urinating on a pew and pushing a parishioner.

"I would say that the majority of our parishes do address the ... special needs of people, and certainly try to do all they can to welcome them," St. Joseph spokeswoman Jane Marrin said. "This has been just an unusual situation."

Adam's mother, Carol Race, calls the focus on his growth "ridiculous" and has found a church in a neighboring town that the entire family can attend. She's also started a ministry called Adam's Pew to encourage

Continued on next page

Autistic kids, continued

more churches to welcome families with special-needs children. Her group's Web site encourages congregants to "turn and smile" rather than stare when a child makes a minor disruption in a worship service.

Autism Resource Available for Congregations



Autism and Faith: A Journey Into Community is a resource written by families, theologians and clergy of various faiths to help church, synagogues, mosques and other places of worship become more welcoming to persons with autism as well as their families. The book is \$5. To order, contact the New Jersey Center for Outreach and Service for the Autism Community by phone: 1-888-4-AUTISM, by email: information@njcosac.org or by going to their website at www.njcosac.org.

"My sense is that if it's a really easy way to include someone with a disability, churches are generally open," said Race, whose son needs to get out of the pew during services and sometimes makes a humming noise when he's nervous.

But "if it involves educating the congregation, if it involves the congregation needing to be tolerant, these are the areas where I think we have a long way to go," she said.

While some churches offer inclusive or separate Sunday school programs, others are branching out into additional ministries for families with developmentally disabled children.

Terri Kellum, the leader of a disabilities ministry at the nondenominational North Arundel Church in Glen Burnie, Md., conducted the first "Buddy Break" at her church on a recent Saturday. She plans to offer the program, created by a Florida ministry called Nathaniel's Hope, once a month to allow parents to drop off their special-needs children for three hours of activities with trained volunteers.

"This is a way of reaching out to them," said Kellum, "where they can come out and socialize, where they can come and feel accepted, where they can come and know the Lord."

Ginny Thornburgh, who directs the Interfaith Initiative for the American Association of People With Disabilities, said churches can model the individual education programs that have been developed by public school systems for children with developmental challenges.

Thornburgh said families and churches can determine together what interests, motivates and calms a child, perhaps by incorporating the advice of a teacher who has worked with the child in a secular school setting.

"Do they need a buddy? Do they need a quieter room? Do they need some break time? How is it that we can uniquely serve them?" are questions Thornburgh says should be asked. "She or he will have particular methods of doing that, and they can easily carry over to the religious school."

"Do they need a buddy? Do they need a quieter room? Do they need some break time? How is it that we can uniquely serve them?" are questions Thornburgh says should be asked. "She or he will have particular methods of doing that, and they can easily carry over to the religious school."

IRS Increases Mileage Rates



The Internal Revenue Service has increased the allowed mileage rate to **\$.585/mile**. For congregations, this will affect the terms of call of your pastors. For more information, please contact the Stated Clerk at 612-871-7281 or statedclerk@ptcaweb.org.



PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH (USA)

PRESBYTERY OF THE
TWIN CITIES AREA

112 W. Franklin Ave.
Suite 508
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Phone: 612-871-7281
Fax: 612-871-0698
E-mail:
communications@ptcaweb.org
Web: www.ptcaweb.org

Presbytery Staff

Robert Cuthill, Interim
Transitional Executive Pres-
byter: ep@ptcaweb.org

Nancy Grittman, Stated
Clerk: stated-
clerk@ptcaweb.org

Risa Anderson, Office Man-
ager: office@ptcaweb.org

Dennis Sanders, IT/
Communications Specialist:
communica-
tions@ptcaweb.org

Joann Hart,
Administrative Assistant:
admin@ptcaweb.org

"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).

Assistant Stated Clerk Needed

The Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area is seeking someone who would be available at Presbytery meetings to assist Stated Clerk Nancy Grittman as "minutes recorder". The person performing this volunteer service will be someone must be familiar with Microsoft Word, and capable of completing a prepared template as the meeting progresses. Accurate recording of motions and the actions taken, as well as recording of votes relating to printed reports of committees will be the most crucial.

The Presbytery meets 6 times each year, with the next meeting being scheduled for September 9, at First Presbyterian Church, White Bear Lake, MN, at 5:00 p.m.

If you are interested, or know someone who might be, please contact Nancy Grittman at the Presbytery Office by phone at 612-871-7281, ext 18 or email at statedclerk@ptcaweb.org.