



**DECEMBER 21, 2007**

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*And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!"*

*Luke 2:10-14 (RSV)*

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**1. SYNOD MEETING SLATED JAN. 20-22:** The annual meeting of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies runs Sunday, Jan. 20, through Tuesday, Jan. 22, at the Mount Olivet Conference & Retreat Center in Farmington, Minn. According to the call to meeting issued in late November, the "purposes of the meeting are to elect officers, to hear reports, to worship, to grow in fellowship, and to take such actions as are necessary for a synod meeting." In his note accompanying the call to meeting, Phil Brown, synod executive, "Be mindful that at the first meeting of the new year approximately one-third of those

participating are new. ... Building relationships and growing a sense of community will allow us to act as a distinctive part of the Body of Christ."

## **2. SYNOD SCHOOL PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL TO BE DISTRIBUTED**

**SOON:** While the Synod School 2008 brochure can be downloaded from the Web – [www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/SYNOD-SCHOOL-BROCHURE-08.pdf](http://www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/SYNOD-SCHOOL-BROCHURE-08.pdf) - additional promotional materials will be forthcoming in a matter of weeks. These materials will include newsletter ads and bulletin inserts. More information about Synod School 2008 can be found at [www.lakesandprairies.org/school.html](http://www.lakesandprairies.org/school.html).

**3. CLEARWATER 2008 IS MORE THAN STRONG KEYNOTE SPEAKER:** Leonard Sweet, called by some one of the most influential Christians in America, may be the keynote speaker for Clearwater 2008, but there is far more taking place at the three-day event April 18-20 at Presbyterian Clearwater Forest, Deerwood, Minn. Some of the session titles include "Congregational Transformation," "Managing Change," "Communications for Churches on a Shoe-String Budget," "Front Porch Church" and "Rattling the Rafters: Worshiping as if Culture Matters." To get the full brochure, go to [www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/Clearwater%202008%20Brochure%20Large.pdf](http://www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/Clearwater%202008%20Brochure%20Large.pdf).

**4. SOUTH DAKOTA NATIVE AMERICAN ACTOR, ACTIVIST DIES:** Floyd Red Crow Westerman, an American Indian activist, actor and folk singer, died April 13. Born in 1936 on the Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota Sioux reservation in South Dakota, Westerman went on to appear in "Dances with Wolves" and had performed with Willie Nelson. He was 71. He had completed work in September on the upcoming Kevin Costner film "Swing Vote." He was buried in Veblen, S.D. Elona Street-Stewart, the synod's associate for racial-ethnic ministries, said friends described the Lake Traverse, S.D., funeral to her, noting "as the procession was getting organized, folks looked up to see seven horses and riders up on the hill, all fully dressed traditional regalia." A full obituary can be found at [www.kansascity.com/414/story/404173.html](http://www.kansascity.com/414/story/404173.html). Additional information about Westerman's life can be found at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Floyd\\_Red\\_Crow\\_Westerman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Floyd_Red_Crow_Westerman).

## **5. PRESBYTERIAN HOMES GETS INITIAL NOD FOR WAYZATA PLAN:**

Presbyterian Homes and Services plan to redevelop the Wayzata Bay Center into an upscale retail area got the initial o.k. – on a 3-2 vote – from the Wayzata, Minn., City Council. Under the plan, the Wayzata Bay Center, now a one-story strip mall, would become a pedestrian-friendly, high-end district featuring retail, senior and conventional housing, offices and maybe a hotel, according to a story in the Star Tribune of Minneapolis-St. Paul. The full story can be found at [www.startribune.com/local/west/12631696.html](http://www.startribune.com/local/west/12631696.html).

**6. MINISTRY OPENS DOORS FOR TRANSITIONING PRISONERS:** Crossroads Connection is a unique prison ministry in Omaha, Neb. And it's growing. To read the story, go to [www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/CROSSROADS.pdf](http://www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/CROSSROADS.pdf). In case you missed it three weeks ago, Keeping in Touch included an article on a successful thrift store that is being operated in Wabeno, Wis. Proceeds are used to help the needy in the area. The story is at [www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/FLP-THRIFT-STORE.pdf](http://www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/FLP-THRIFT-STORE.pdf).

**7. STEWARDSHIP CONFERENCE SET IN MARCH IN TEXAS:** The Presbyterian stewardship conference "Stewardship Kaleidoscope," designed for elders, pastors, presbytery staff and volunteers, runs March 10-12 at the American Airlines Training & Conference Center in Fort Worth, Texas. Plenary leaders for the conference are Charles F.

Easley Sr., former dean and director of development at Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary; Cynthia Campbell, president of McCormick Seminary; and Karl Travis, pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Fort Worth, and according to conference promotional materials, he is an "irreverent Generation Xer ... and a disciple possessed of the idea that stewardship is the foundational concept for mature faith." Additional information about the conference, including registration information, can be found at [www.synodsun.com/stewardship](http://www.synodsun.com/stewardship).

**8. PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE IS OPPORTUNITY FOR GIFT:** It may be a gift out of the ordinary, but Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is always an opportunity for an out-of-the-ordinary gift. In its yearly summary, PDA noted that storms and weather-related disasters have been prevalent. Since January 2007, 33 members of the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance National Response Team have gone to 45 presbyteries in 25 states. In just the last two months, PDA has responded to fires, flooding, ice storms and the multiple homicides in Crandon, Wis. PDA receives a substantial amount of its funding from the One Great Hour of Sharing offering, but it also accepts individual gifts. To learn more, go to [www.pcusa.org/pda](http://www.pcusa.org/pda).

**9. PHEWA SEEKS MINISTRY AWARD NOMINEES:** The Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA) is seeking nominations for four ministry awards that will be celebrated during the social welfare ministries group's reception at the 218th General Assembly in San Jose, Calif., in June. Recipients will also be honored at a meeting of the presbytery where they are engaged in ministry. The full story can be found at [www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07818.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07818.htm).

**10. FOUNDATION'S 'YMILIVE' SEEKS TO 'CONNECT AND ENGAGE':** Tapping the creative energy of potentially thousands of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) youth in order to "connect" and "engage" the denomination around mission and ministry is the goal of a new effort of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation. YMI Live (Youth Mission Initiative LIVE) is a Web-based project launched by the Foundation in November to create an Internet community of Presbyterian youth and adults joined to engage around the mission and goals of the denomination. The full story can be found at [www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07827.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07827.htm).

**11. SWEATERS COLLECTED TO KEEP PITTSBURGH NEEDY WARM:** More than 3,000 have been collected in the first year of the "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood Sweater Drive." The effort to furnish winter clothing to those in need in the Pittsburgh area – where the late Rev. Fred Rogers lived and worked during his entire career – is coordinated by Presbyterian Media Mission (PMM) and co-sponsored by the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, the United Way, and 400 Presbyterian Churches of the tri-state area (Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Ohio). The collection ran all of November and concluded with a celebration on Dec. 12 at the museum and finished at participating Presbyterian churches on Dec. 16, allowing time for United Way agencies, Presbyterian missions in the area, and those churches with neighborhood clothing distribution channels to get sweaters to those in need in time for Christmas. The full story can be found at [www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07834.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07834.htm).

**12: THE TOP 10 PREDICTIONS FOR 2008:** The author is unknown, but the following came from the December 2007 edition of the Light of the Northern Plains, the newsletter of the Presbytery of Northern Plains.

1. The Bible will still have the answers.

2. Prayer will still work.
3. The Holy Spirit will still move.
4. God will still inhabit the praises of His people.
5. There will still be God-anointed preaching.
6. There will still be singing of praise.
7. God will still pour out blessings upon His people.
8. There will still be room at the Cross.
9. Jesus can still love you.
10. Jesus will still save the lost.

God whispers in your soul and speaks to your mind. Sometimes when you don't have time to listen, He has to throw a brick at you.