



JULY 2007

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1. CLEARWATER 2008 EVENT HIGHLIGHTED BY LEONARD SWEET: Leonard Sweet, characterized as "one of the church's most important and provocative thinkers," will highlight Clearwater 2008, a three-day event of workshops, seminars and other activities at Presbyterian Clearwater Forest, located in central Minnesota, April 18-20, 2008. Sweet, currently the E. Stanley Jones professor of evangelism at Drew University, Madison, N.J., is the author of more than 100 articles, over 600 published sermons, and dozens of books. More information about Sweet can be found at www.leonardsweet.com/biocv.asp. More information regarding the Clearwater 2008 schedule can be obtained by writing Bruce Tammi at bruce@brucetammi.com.

2. 'CELEBRATION OF LIFE' FOR LYNN TUCKER BROWN ON WEB SITE: The Celebration of Life program for Lynn Tucker Brown, the late wife of Synod Executive Phil Brown, has been added to the synod's Web site. The program contains the reflections shared at the service by the Revs. David Droog, Linda Loving and Lucy Rupe. To reach the program, click www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/CELEBRATION-OF-LIFE.pdf.

3. SYNOD OF LIVING WATERS OFFERS 'CLEAN WATER' DVD: A new film about the Living Waters for the World mission, titled "Clean Water for All of God's Children," is now available, according to Terry Newland, synod executive for the Synod of Living Waters. Living Waters for the World is the global mission resource of the Synod of Living Waters. Shot on location at the Clean Water U training program and at four sites in the Yucatan of Mexico, the DVD is "the first to capture the full scope of our mission, and most important, its impact on all involved," Newland wrote. In addition to the film, the DVD contains an "additional information" section that contains answers to frequently asked questions about Living Waters for the World. Copies of the DVD can be obtained by contacting Steve Young at 615.261.4008 or steve@livingwatersfortheworld.org. More information about the Living Waters for the World can be found at www.livingwatersfortheworld.org.

4. MINNESOTA VALLEYS CHURCH FEATURED IN PRESBYTERIANS TODAY: Faith Presbyterian Church of Silver Lake, Minn., is featured in the "Bright Ideas" column of the July-August edition of Presbyterians Today magazine. The article begins, noting that Silver Lake "is a small town of 700 persons, but members of Faith Presbyterian Church are thinking big. They want their church to be one where every child is welcomed and every family is nurtured." The complete text of the article can be found at www.pcusa.org/today/brightideas/content.htm.

5. SYNOD'S CAMPUS MINISTRY TASK FORCE EVALUATES SYNOD ROLE: At its May meeting, the Synod of Lakes and Prairies authorized the creation of a task force to explore the synod's involvement in campus ministry. According to Phil Brown, synod executive, creating the task force "does not mean the synod is questioning the value of campus ministry, just the synod's relation to it and its role in the process." Synod post-secondary education grants for campus ministry are currently handled by the synod's Ecclesiastical Relations Committee. According to the synod's May minutes, background information pertaining to the creation of the task force stated, "While campus ministry programs are increasing their requests for funding, there is less funding available." Brown noted, "While the financial realities have become an increasing concern, the Ecclesiastical Relations Committee has chosen to make a more comprehensive exploration of the place of campus ministry among its priorities." The task force is expected to submit its summative report to the synod by January 2008.

6. PRES HOUSE SLATES OPEN HOUSE AUG. 7 FOR NEW BUILDING: In a letter to friends of Pres House, the Rev. Mark Elsdon wrote, "I am thrilled to announce that our new student apartment building is finished! It is truly a beautiful building and an amazing addition to Pres House and the campus. Students will be moving in beginning in August. The renovation of the heritage building is also coming along very well and will be complete by mid-August." An open house is scheduled Tuesday, Aug. 7, from 1 to 4 p.m. Pictures of construction progress are located at <http://www.preshouse.org/sth.progress.cfm>. The Rev. Elsdon also announced a gift of \$250,000 that will, he wrote, "cover most of the cost of replacing our 75-year-old roof."

7. KIRKPATRICK ISSUES STATEMENT REGARDING VATICAN DECLARATION: Clifton Kirkpatrick, General Assembly stated clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), has issued an open letter to Presbyterians joining other churches and ecumenical groups in questioning a recent pronouncement by the Vatican that Protestant churches "are not churches in the proper sense." Kirkpatrick said the July 10 statement, which the Vatican said was endorsed by Pope Benedict XVI, "mischaracterizes our faith" and "reopens questions of Christian unity ... " The complete story and the full text of Kirkpatrick's letter can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07416.htm.

8. SERGEANT SEEKS PRAYER FOR ONE OF HIS SOLDIERS: Sgt. 1st Class Stephen LaRocque, a 13-year Army veteran and the son of the Rev. Kathleen LaRocque, recently sent the following email from Iraq regarding one of his soldiers. The letter had been reprinted through the Presbytery of Central Nebraska email network. Kathleen is the pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Broken Bow, Neb. On July 12 Stephen wrote:

"As some of you know already, I had a Soldier get wounded on Monday. He was headed to a four-day pass in the International Zone in Baghdad when his truck was struck by a road-side bomb. A piece of shrapnel went into his head, his right eye ruptured, one of his lungs is collapsed, and his left eye isn't doing too good. His name is Mikeal Miller, he is 21 years old, and has been married for less than a year.

"They did immediate surgery on him, they cut some holes into his skull to relieve the pressure from the concussion, they removed all of the clotting from his brain, and they did what they could to save the left eye. Mikeal's vital signs are strong, and he seems to be responsive in the tests that they give him, but he has been under sedation since the attack, so it is unclear how much function he is expected to have or if his left eye will work or not. The shrapnel is still in his brain, they will have to go and remove it at a later time.

"Mikeal is in Germany right now and is expected to fly back to the States on Friday, last I heard his wife was on the way to meet him in Germany. I will keep all of you updated if you wish, but please pray for Mikeal, his family, and my other Soldiers as they all deal with this terrible tragedy."

Kathleen noted that Stephen, in his first tour in Iraq, is the youngest her and her husband's four sons. Stephen is married to Nicole and is the father of three children: Devan, 9, Tristan, 8, and Landan, 4. Everyone hopes Stephen returns by Christmas.

9. ELDERS IN SYNOD REGISTER FOR NATIONAL ELDER CONFERENCE: As of July 13, elders from 69 presbyteries have registered to attend the first National Elders Conference Aug. 29-31 in Nashville. Elders from six presbyteries within the Synod of Lakes and Prairies are represented among those registered for the event. The six presbyteries are Central Nebraska, East Iowa, Homestead, Minnesota Valleys, Twin Cities Area and Winnebago. Details about the conference and registration materials can be found at www.pcusa.org/eldersconference.

10. KIRKPATRICK SEEKS FARM BILL TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assembly Stated Clerk the Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick joined a number of religious leaders July 17 in a letter sent to the speaker of the United States House of Representatives pressing for a reform-minded farm bill that "strengthens rural communities." The letter, sent to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, coincided with the start of debates on the 2007 Farm Bill by the House Agriculture Committee. Copies of the letter also were sent to both Democrat and Republican leadership of the House. This complete story and full text of the letter can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/07435.htm.

11. RACIAL-ETHNIC SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE: The application and application guidelines for Synod of Lakes and Prairies' Racial-Ethnic Scholarships are available online at www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/r_e_scholarship_app_2007.pdf. The Racial-Ethnic Scholarship Program is an educational assistance program designed to encourage minority students in their preparation for service in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The deadline for scholarship applications is Sept. 28. Questions concerning the scholarship can be directed to Mary Taaffe at mtaaffe@lakesandprairies.org.

12. RESTORING CREATION CONFERENCE PLANNED IN OCTOBER: The sixth National Eco-Justice Conference of Presbyterians for Restoring Creation is scheduled at Mo-Ranch Presbyterian Conference Center in Hunt, Texas, Oct. 25-28. At the conference, participants will explore the themes of food and energy choices. Speakers and workshop leaders will focus on several subjects including biblical and theological foundations for eco-justice, social justice, and scientific and political issues. Presbyterians for Restoring Creation is an affiliate, grassroots organization of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Details about the conference, "Earth Sabbath, Earth Justice: Protecting God's Gifts of Food and Fuel," can be found at www.prcweb.org.