

JULY 6, 2009

The synod can be found online at
www.lakesandprairies.org.

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1. IOWA SISTER CHURCHES PARTNER FOR SUCCESS:

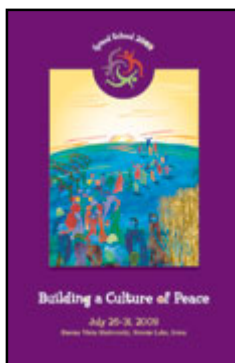
When the economy takes a turn for the worse, budgets must be trimmed, and the first thing that usually goes is financial support for public assistance agencies. Unfortunately, when the economy is down, that's when those services are needed most. Collegiate and Northminster Presbyterian churches, sister churches in Ames, Iowa, know this, and set out to boost support for a few local organizations to minimize the impact of reduced government funding. Northminster branched off from Collegiate in 1961 to better serve the growing northeast portion of Ames, but the two congregations have remained close and often work together to serve Ames as a whole. The complete story is at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/09564.htm. ([Return to top](#))

2. PRESBYTERY CONNECTION ASSISTS IN FLOOD RELIEF:

A recent edition of Out & About, the newsletter of the Presbytery of East Iowa, carried a variety of mission stories, including one of a presbytery-to-presbytery connection. The story noted, "A presbytery to presbytery connection was made when [the Presbytery of East Iowa] received \$394 from the Presbytery of Missouri River Valley for flood relief. Rick Sleyster, peacemaking chair for MRV, said they were encouraged by the Synod of Lakes and Prairies to use their portion of the Peacemaking Offering to support a mission of their choice. Having returned from a work trip to Oakville [Iowa] last August with a group from Shenandoah [Iowa] First Presbyterian where he is the pastor Rick said the flooding in eastern Iowa was fresh in their minds and close to their hearts." The complete story can be found in [Out & About](#). ([Return to top](#))

3. ONE YEAR LATER, DISASTER STILL TAKES TOLL IN IOWA:

A new website is available to help stress-suffering Iowans find information about getting help in the wake of last year's natural disasters. The site, www.projectrecoveryiowa.org, features information about Project Recovery Iowa's services that include free confidential crisis counseling. According to the site, the anniversary of a disaster can reawaken a wide range of feelings and reactions among survivors. ([Return to top](#))



4. MORE SYNOD SCHOOL STUFF POSTED TO WEBSITE:

Did you know that if you're going to Synod School for the first time, there is an orientation session slated opening Sunday? Synod School, a longtime ministry of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, runs Sunday, July 26, through Friday, July 31. An information sheet for Synod School first-timers, and information sheets pertaining to other Synod School details, have been posted on the

News around the PC(USA)

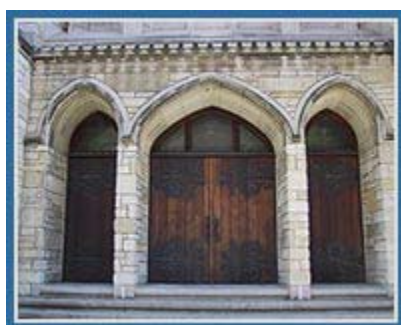
- [13.](#) Forbes succumbs to cancer
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synod's website at www.lakesandprairies.org/school.html. ([Return to top](#))

5. 'MORE IN NEW WAYS' HIGHLIGHTS

COMMUNICATORS EVENT: 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. The conference will include sessions on Google Tools, Presbyterian Neighbor News, Writing for the Web, and Doing More (or at least as much) with Less. Registration is \$100 and includes all sessions, accommodations, opening dinner, two breakfasts and a lunch. For those who would not need accommodations, registration is \$50 for all sessions. Anyone who would like to register for the event can do so by sending an email to Duane Sweep, associate for communications at the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, at dsweep@lakesandprairies.org. The email should include name and position. The registration fee can be mailed to Duane Sweep, Synod of Lakes and Prairies, 2115 Cliff Drive, Eagan, MN 55122. ([Return to top](#))

6. COLLEGIATE MINISTRIES CONFERENCE IN PLANNING STAGES: A planning group, working on the second annual Collegiate Ministries Conference in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, has set Monday through Wednesday, Nov. 9-11, as the dates for this year's event. A location, however, has not been firmly established. Just as last year, the conference is targeted at campus ministry staff and chaplains of Presbyterian-related colleges and universities. Heather Libich, director of child, youth and young adult ministries at First Presbyterian Church, Cedar Falls, Iowa, along with Elona Street-Stewart, synod associate for racial ethnic ministries and community empowerment, and Duane Sweep, synod associate for communications, have begun the planning work for the conference. ([Return to top](#))



7. PRES HOUSE RECEIVES TAX EXEMPTION: During the previous weeks Pres House, the Presbyterian campus ministry at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, has been working to obtain a property tax exemption for its student housing facility. Just last week, Pres House received the exemption. Mark Elsdon, executive director of Pres House and campus co-pastor, wrote, "Thanks to God's grace and the hard work of the many friends and supporters of Pres House, legislation ensuring our organization's property tax exemption has now been enacted. In our conversations with legislators, we learned that your phone calls and

letters DID make a difference." The Wisconsin legislature passed an amendment to the budget bill that creates a property tax exemption for student housing facilities owned by non-profit organizations. Elsdon earlier wrote, "This clarification to existing state law is critical for Pres House in fulfilling its mission of serving students with weekly worship services, small groups, service activities, and a unique residential facility that is home to 250 students." Pres House can be found online at www.preshouse.org. Before the amendment became part of the budget bill, a story in the Wisconsin State Journal said indicated that without the amendment Pres House would have faced a property tax liability of \$239,000. ([Return to top](#))

8. MARTIN HIGHLIGHTED IN GAMC EXEC'S LETTER: In a June 26 letter to members of the General Assembly Mission Council, Linda Valentine, executive director of the council, highlighted the work of Jan Martin, Crossroads Presbyterian Church, Mequon, Wis. Martin is a member of Crossroads' mission committee and a member of the GAMC. Valentine wrote that Martin was "instrumental in advocating for and in securing a \$200,000 pledge from her church to support the funding for three mission co-workers, with whom Crossroads would like to establish personal relationships. The church's pledge was part of its recent successful

capital campaign in which the decision was made to tithe to Presbyterian World Mission. In addition to this pledge, the church included a non-designated gift out of their current operating funds to international mission co-workers, targeting places in the world where the need is greatest. Steve Carlton, mission chair at Crossroads, related to us that everyone said the timing wasn't right with the economy in such a slump, but that including the appeal for support of mission workers gave momentum to their campaign that exceeded their goal by \$500,000." ([Return to top](#))

9. UD ADDS 5 CESSNA AIRCRAFT: The University of Dubuque, one of seven Presbyterian related colleges and universities in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, bought five new Cessna 172 SP glass cockpit aircraft to be used for primary and instrument training. The addition of these airplanes increases the university's fleet to 23. UD's Flight Operations Center is located at the Dubuque Regional Airport. The mission of the Aviation Department is to provide students with the professional skills that allow for success in all segments of the aviation industry while enhancing their critical thinking and decision making skills. The university is online at www.dbq.edu. ([Return to top](#))

10. WEBINARS SET ON MAKING SHIFTS WITHOUT MAKING WAVES: "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 of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). For the first time during this pilot project the webinar will be offered on multiple days: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, July 21-23, at 2 p.m. 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 webinar will offer a coach approach to introducing and managing in churches that will minimize the destructive waves that often come when change is mentioned. Additional information about the webinars is located at www.pcusa.org/churchgrowth/webinar.htm. ([Return to top](#))

11. SUMMER BOARD BULLETIN IS ONLINE: The summer newsletter of the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is available online. The Board Bulletin can be found at www.pensions.org. The issue covers discussion and decisions by BOP directors at their June 27 meeting in Philadelphia. ([Return to top](#))

12. PENSIONS BOARDS EXPANDS, SIMPLIFIES MEDICAL PLAN: After completing a two-year review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Medical Plan for church workers, the denomination's Board of Pensions has approved numerous "modifications" designed to make the plan simpler and more understandable. And at a time when many health insurers are scaling back benefits, the net effect of the BOP's changes is \$6 million in enhanced benefits, most of it through a new program to cover habilitative services for children with congenital developmental disabilities such as Down's syndrome, autism, cerebral palsy, intellectual disability and spina bifida. And it's being done without a dues increase. Medical Plan dues will remain at 19.5 percent of "effective salary" in 2010, the third consecutive year at that rate. The complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/09563.htm. ([Return to top](#))



13. FORBES SUCCUMBS TO PANCREATIC CANCER AT 62: The Rev. William Ross Forbes, who served the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in a variety of capacities for 37 years, including leadership at every PC(USA) General Assembly during that time, died June 30 at Johns Hopkins Medical Center in Baltimore. He was 62. Forbes, a native of Jersey City, N.J., was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer five years ago and his gallant battle with the disease was an inspiration to all who knew him. In a joint statement, Board of Pensions President Rob Maggs and General Assembly Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons said Forbes' battle with cancer was "yet one more example of his approach to his life and to his spirited faith and ministry." The complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/09552.htm. A memorial service is slated July 7 at Westfield (N.J.) Presbyterian Church. Cards and letters may be sent to Forbes' wife, Patty, at 761 First Street, Westfield, NJ 07090. The family has asked that those wishing to make contributions make them to the Board of Pensions Assistance Program, 2000 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103. ([Return to top](#))

14. PC(USA) RECORDS STEEPEST MEMBERSHIP LOSS SINCE 1983: Membership in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) fell by 69,381 in 2008, the Office of the General Assembly has announced in its annual statistical report, continuing a trend that began in the mid-1960s. Total membership of the denomination is now 2,140,165. According to the Research Services office of the General Assembly Mission Council, the 2008 decline was the PC(USA)'s largest numerical and percentage net membership loss since Presbyterian reunion in 1983. Membership in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies at the close of 2008 stands at 898 churches with 149,921 members. The annual statistical report can be found at www.pcusa.org/oga. This complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/09525.htm. ([Return to top](#))

15. CIVIL UNION, CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE COMMITTEE SEEKS FEEDBACK: What is the place of covenanted same-gender partnerships in the Christian community? It is a question the General Assembly Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage is posing to the church for input. It is also one piece of the mandate the 218th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) gave the committee when the assembly called on its moderator to appoint the group. "We not only covet the prayers of folks across the church as we do our work," said the Rev. Jim Szeyller of Charlotte Presbytery, "but we also want as much input as possible." The complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/09557.htm. ([Return to top](#))

16. ELDERS TOLD NO CHURCH WILL RISE ABOVE ELDER QUALITY: "No church will rise above the quality of its elders," the Rev. Joan Gray, moderator of the 217th General Assembly, told the National Elders Conference in Atlanta June 12 as she outlined the characteristics and practices required to be an effective, quality spiritual leader. The conference was part of the denomination's June 11-13 inaugural "Big Tent," combining 10 regular PC(USA) conferences into a single event with joint worship, group meals and a plethora of workshops open to all. Gray emphatically said that any person serving in his or her church is in a position of leadership. The complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/09531.htm. ([Return to top](#))



17. PASTORS PUSH FOR AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE: More than 600 pastors from across the country, including a score of Presbyterians, have launched a radio advertising campaign in five key states to advocate for affordable health care for all U.S. families. The radio ads, targeting lawmakers in Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana, Nebraska and North Carolina, remind U.S. Senators in those states, whose support is considered crucial to the passage of federal health care legislation, that the current U.S. health care system is "not who we are as a nation" and that "America can do better." The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assembly has repeatedly called for health care reform that provides greater access for all Americans. The complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/09550.htm. The radio ads can be heard at http://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/2518/content.jsp?content_KEY=6038. ([Return to top](#))



18. SYNOD'S FACEBOOK GROUP APPROACHES 100 MEMBERS: As of July 6, the Synod of Lakes and Prairies' Facebook group had 97 members. However, Duane Sweep, associate for communications of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, said the responsiveness of members in the synod group has been limited. In fact, only one person other than synod staff has posted a comment in the group. The synod group can be found by signing in at www.facebook.com and searching "Synod of Lakes and Prairies." (Hint: the group is the one with the synod's logo.) ([Return to top](#))