

MARCH 27, 2009

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

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1. PRAYING THE DIKES HOLD IN FARGO-MOORHEAD: According to a report Saturday morning, March 28, in The Forum of Fargo-Moorhead, a newspaper in Fargo, N.D., the

National Weather Service gave the residents of Fargo and Moorhead, Minn., "a dose of good news, ... saying the flood outlook for the Red River seems to be improving and may not be as dire as originally expected." The article went on to note, "Despite the forecast revision, North Dakota officials still intensified their efforts to fend off the floodwaters, deploying high-tech Predator drone aircraft, calling up more National Guard troops and asking residents to be on the lookout for any breaches in levees."

The Red River, which divides Fargo and Moorhead, may have crested around midnight at 40.82 feet, according to the National Weather Service. As of 8 a.m. it had dropped to 40.69 feet. The Forum article noted, "But the river can still fluctuate up to a foot, given that ice floes affect the flow of the river and could lead to periodic rises."

Much of Fargo-Moorhead has been evacuated. Volunteers have worked throughout the week to raise the levels of the dikes in both cities. Jim and Katrine Anderson, Duluth, National Response Team members of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, are in Moorhead. PDA has also indicated that it will provide an initial grant of \$10,000 to the Presbytery of Northern Plains to meet disaster needs.

While volunteers from outside the Red River Valley are not currently sought, volunteers will be needed in the days and weeks ahead to work in areas that have been flooded and to remove the debris from this week's work to meet the rising water. The Rev. Nancy Emerson, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Moorhead, said during the week, "Every sand bag that has gone down will have to be picked up." The Presbytery of Northern Plains is developing strategies to meet flooding that has caused damage across its territory.

The Red River is expected to crest in Grand Forks, N.D., home of the presbytery's office, at 52 feet, two feet below its level during the major flood of 1997, and under the level of existing dikes.

PDA is accepting donations online at www.pcusa.org/pda. Up-to-date information about the flood can be found at the Web sites of The Forum of Fargo-Moorhead at www.inforum.com and the Grand Forks Herald at www.grandforksherald.com.

In the photo above, volunteers stand on the East Dike in Fargo, helping to build a levee on the banks of the Red River. Photo by Patsy Lynch/FEMA.
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'Bulletin' online

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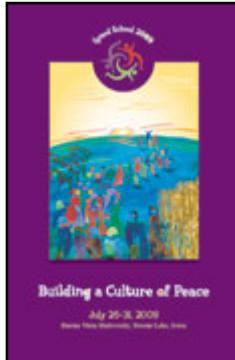
[16.](#) Jerusalem documentary planned on PBS

[17.](#) WJK publishes book on first Easter

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2. PRESBYTERIAN HOMES AND SERVICES

TAKES IN EVACUEES: Presbyterian Homes and Services, Roseville, Minn., began early Friday morning, March 27, providing homes and care to 11 long-term care residents from Eventide Senior Living Communities of Moorhead, Minn. Eventide had been notified Thursday to evacuate and contacted PHS at 5 p.m. The bus carrying the evacuees arrived at the Roseville Care Center at 2:45 a.m. PHS reported that with the help of the Roseville Fire Department and extra staff called in for the night, the new residents were warm, dry, safe and asleep by 4 a.m. PHS can be found online at www.preshomes.com/. ([Return to top](#))



3. SYNOD SCHOOL

REGISTRATION ON WEB

SITE: Synod School 2009 registration materials can be found online at www.lakesandprairies.org/school.html. Synod School 2009 runs Sunday through Friday, July 26-31, at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa. This year's theme is "Building a Culture of Peace." ([Return to top](#))

4. SYNOD SPRING MEETING SLATED APRIL 26-28: The Synod of Lakes and Prairies will open its spring meeting Sunday, April 26, at the Mount Olivet Conference and Retreat Center in Farmington, Minn. The meeting will run through Tuesday, April 28. ([Return to top](#))

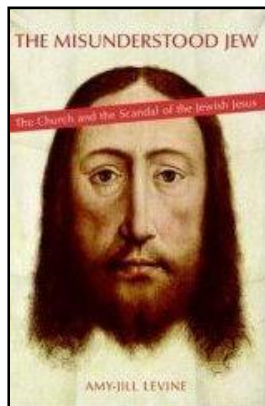
5. HILLCREST WORKS ON DRIVE FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE CENTER: Gary Gansemer, president of Hillcrest Family Services of Dubuque, Iowa, wrote about last year's floods in Iowa in his newsletter column, "When the flood waters and the tears drained away it became evident that [Trinity United Methodist Church], the site of thousands of baptisms, weddings, funerals, and God inspired hymns would not survive." While the church building would not survive, a stained glass window from the church has been donated to Hillcrest for use in its Spiritual Life Center when the facility is constructed. Hillcrest's fund-raising effort to build the center is now underway. Gansemer's column can be found in Hillcrest's newsletter online at www.hillcrest-fs.org/PDF/Spring%2009%20Calling.pdf. ([Return to top](#))

6. OTHER CHURCHES USE 'NOISY OFFERINGS:' The last issue of Keeping in Touch included a note about "noisy offerings." A note from Kris Peterson, communications and resource coordinator in Homestead Presbytery, pointed out that Good Shepherd Presbyterian in Lincoln, Neb., holds "Noisy Sundays" on the fifth Sunday of the month. She wrote, "The money collected is being applied toward the building debt. In less than one year of collecting change, the congregation has cut their loan down by three years." Good Shepard can be found online at www.goodsheppc.org/. ([Return to top](#))

7. LEXINGTON CHURCH SEEKS COLLABORATION IN YOUTH MISSION: The Rev. Caroline Vickery of First Presbyterian Church, Lexington, Neb., sent a note throughout the Central Nebraska Presbytery this week, looking for a church that would "welcome the addition of several youth, a pastor and an additional adviser or two" on a mission trip close to home, "perhaps Iowa, Omaha or some other project." Any church interested in such collaboration can contact Vickery at revcaroline01@charter.net. (CHURCH NAME) can be found online at www.lexpresbyterian.com/. ([Return to top](#))

8. OKOBOJI CAMP DEVELOPS NEW MINISTRY POSITION: The Presbyterian Camp on Lake Okoboji, Milford, Iowa, is developing a new ministry as Lakeview Lodge, the camp's new retreat center, nears completion, according to Jason McDuffie, camp administrator. "There are a multitude of tasks that will need to be completed as we begin to incorporate this exciting addition into the ministry program of the Camp," McDuffie wrote. The term of the new position, defined by McDuffie as "a month, or two, for six months or a year as a mission volunteer (or couple)," will include the tasks to prepare the 12 individual rooms for occupancy. Additional information about the ministry can be obtained by contacting McDuffie at 712.320.3314 or jason.mcduffie@presbycamp.org. The camp can be found

online at www.presbycamp.org. ([Return to top](#))



9. COE SCHEDULES APPEARANCE OF BIBLICAL SCHOLAR, AUTHOR: Dr. Amy-Jill Levine, biblical scholar and author of "The Misunderstood Jew," will present two public lectures at Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, April 2 and 3. She will address the relationship between Jesus and historical Judaism. Levine offers a provocative perspective on Jesus as a Jew. She is the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Professor of New Testament Studies at Vanderbilt Divinity School. Her first public lecture, "Misunderstanding Judaism-Misunderstanding Jesus," is Thursday, April 2, at 7:30 p.m. in Kesler Lecture Hall, Hickok Hall. The second lecture, "Hearing the Parables in their Jewish Contexts," is Friday, April 3, at 3 p.m. in the same location. Additional information can be obtained by contacting the Rev. Kristin Hutson at khutson@coe.edu. The college is online at www.coe.edu. ([Return to top](#))

10. UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY NAMES NEW PRESIDENT: The Rev. Mary E. McNamara, an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), will become the next president of United Theological Seminary in New Brighton, Minn., the seminary's board of trustees announced this month. Since 1998 McNamara has served as executive vice president of Union Theological Seminary in New York City. She grew up in Cambridge, Minn., and is a graduate of Carleton College, Northfield, Minn., and Harvard Divinity School. The seminary can be found online at www.unitedseminary.edu. ([Return to top](#))

11. HEIDELBERG CATECHISM COMMITTEE HOLDS FIRST MEETING: Members of the General Assembly Special Committee on Correcting Translation Problems of the Heidelberg Catechism gathered for their first meeting March 27 at the Presbyterian Center in Louisville. The 218th General Assembly proposed changes that revolve around correcting "translation problems in five responses of the Heidelberg Catechism as found in The Book of Confessions and to add the original Scripture texts of the German Heidelberg Catechism." The Rev. Gary Neal Hansen of John Knox Presbytery serves as member of the committee. The complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/pressreleases/oga09002.htm. ([Return to top](#))

12. GAC CLOSES NEARLY \$10 MILLION GAP IN MISSION BUDGET: The General Assembly Council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) closed a \$9.92 million shortfall in the 2009 General Assembly Mission Budget March 27, making budget reductions of \$3.99 million and using unspent previous year revenue totaling \$5.93 million. In doing so, the council reduced the mission budget from \$110,885,317, which it approved last September, to \$106,914,584. The overall 4 percent budget reduction includes a 16 percent decrease in unrestricted spending and a 1 percent increase in restricted expenditures. The budget cuts announced today include the elimination of 14 incumbent positions and 19 vacant positions at the Presbyterian Center here. The complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/09254. ([Return to top](#))

13. BOARD OF PENSIONS POSTS SPRING BULLETIN ONLINE: The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has posted the spring issue of The Board Bulletin online at www.pensions.org/portal/server.pt?open=514&objID=71658&mode=2. The publication covers decisions and discussions by the directors of the Board of Pensions. Among the topics covered in this issue include a review of the board's investment portfolio and its reserves, and a special open enrollment period for optional long-term care insurance. ([Return to top](#))

14. GROUP PLANS URBAN PROGRAM IN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE: The Presbyterian Conservation Corps, a joint project of the Presbyterians for Restoring Creation and the Presbyterian Church Camp and Conference Association, will conduct its first-ever urban program focused on environmental justice in Chicago, Ill., this summer. The program seeks to train and inspire young adults in eco-stewardship within the wider context of Christian faith. The goal of this new initiative is to help Presbyterians become better caretakers of the planet. The application deadline for the summer program is May 1. It is located online at www.presbyterianconservationcorps.org. ([Return to top](#))

15. PRESBYTERIANS JOIN IN ECUMENICAL ADVOCACY DAYS: The theme of this year's Ecumenical Advocacy Days was clear right from the beginning: Christians have a responsibility to keep Earth from harm and to ensure that there is "Enough for All Creation." Fr. Sean McDonagh, a Columban missionary priest and opening worship speaker for the March 13-17 conference, emphasized this call: "We must protect this planet, which is God's gift for us," he said. "Churches and religions can play a vital role in supplying consciousness." Ecumenical Advocacy Days is a movement of the ecumenical Christian community that works to strengthen the Christian voice and to advocate for a wide variety of U.S. domestic and international policy issues. The complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/09245. ([Return to top](#))

16. JERUSALEM DOCUMENTARY SLATED ON PBS: For more than 40 centuries, untold numbers of Jews, Christians and Muslims have come to Jerusalem to look for God. "Jerusalem: Center of the World," a two-hour film in high-definition by Emmy Award-winning producer and director Andrew Goldberg and Oregon Public Television, is the first documentary of this scope to delve into the historical facts and religious beliefs that have led so many to live and die for this city. The Public Broadcasting System will air the documentary Wednesday, April 1, at 9 p.m. CDT. A preview of the movie is online at <http://www.twocatstv.com/jerusalem/>. ([Return to top](#))

17. WJK PUBLISHES BOOK ON FIRST EASTER: Pay attention to history and archaeology and you will find yourself closer to the truth about Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, according to Craig A. Evans and N. T. Wright, two renowned and respected scholars on the historical Jesus. They cast their investigative eyes on what really happened in "Jesus, the Final Days," published by Westminster John Knox. Together, Evans and Wright succinctly and accessibly convey what is actually known about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus using the latest historical and archaeological findings. How were criminal trials and executions conducted during the time of Jesus? Is New Testament literature consistent with existing archaeological evidence on contemporary burial practices? Additional information about the book can be found in the Westminster John Knox catalog at www.wjkbooks.com. ([Return to top](#))

18. YOUTUBE VIDEO NOTES CONFLUENCE OF TECHNOLOGY, INFORMATION: The development of new knowledge and the speed of information transmission is driving social change at an ever-increasing speed. A video on YouTube looks notes the rapid growth at www.youtube.com/watch?v=cL9Wu2kWwSY. ([Return to top](#))