



NOVEMBER 9, 2007

You can find the synod online at www.lakesandprairies.org and on MySpace at www.myspace.com/synodoflakesandprairies.

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1. SYNOD SCHOOL 2008 BROCHURE DISTRIBUTED: While course catalogs and registration information won't be coming out until March, the initial brochure announcing Synod School 2008, "Coloring Outside the Lines," is now available. Synod School is a special learning and personal enrichment experience for all ages. The week is designed for laity and clergy, individuals and families. Classes and activities are available for adults, youth and children – some separately, some intergenerational – to stretch the mind and nurture the soul. More than 600 adults and children – a record number – participated in Synod School 2007. Synod School will run July 27 through Aug. 1 at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa. Scott Nesbitt, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Clinton, Iowa, will be convocation speaker. Worship leaders will be Howard Chapman of First Presbyterian Church, Marion, Iowa; Betty Weidert of Lake City Union Presbyterian Church, Lake City, Iowa; and Nancy Ross-Hullinger, Avoca Presbyterian Church, Avoca, Iowa. To obtain additional information about Synod School 2008, write Diana Barber, Associate Synod Executive for Leadership Development, at dbarber@lakesandprairies.org.

2. MISSION MOSAIC SITES NEED FOR CONTINUED KATRINA RESPONSE: The most recent Mission Mosaic, a magazine of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, includes a report on the continuing response to Hurricane Katrina and emphasizes the need for work teams. The report, "Raising Hope," notes that 31,350 volunteer work team participants have given 1.174 million hours of service valued at \$17 per hour – a total dollar amount of nearly \$20 million. The last issue of Keeping in Touch incorrectly reported that only a multi-Iowa presbytery group was traveling to the Gulf area. In fact, the multi-presbytery group includes Iowa, Minnesota and South Dakota. Two complete PDA campus that can accommodate 180 people have been reserved for the group. Each presbytery is responsible for transportation to New Orleans. The registration deadline is Nov. 20 and the Presbytery of North Central Iowa is handling registration. Vicki Thordsen at North Central Iowa – vthordsen@presbynciowa.org -- has trip fact sheets and registration forms. Additional information about the continuing response to Katrina and other disasters can be found at www.pcusa.org/pda.

3. COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY, SEMINARY, FAMILY SERVICES TOUR BLOGGED: Phil Brown, synod executive, and Duane Sweep, synod associate for communications, traveled through Wisconsin and Iowa Oct. 30 through Nov. 2, visiting Carroll and Coe colleges, the University of Dubuque and its seminary, and Hillcrest Family Services, and reported on the trip on the synod's MySpace page at www.myspace.com/synodoflakesandprairies. Hillcrest Family Services is one of the best-kept secrets in the synod. An initial compilation of its services can be found at www.hillcrest-fs.org/services.html -- and that's only the beginning. Carroll College in Waukesha, Wis., Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and the University of Dubuque are three of Presbyterian-related colleges in the synod. The University of Dubuque is the only Presbyterian-related university with its own seminary. Web sites for each of the institutions are Carroll College, www.cc.edu; Coe College, www.coe.edu; and University of Dubuque, www.dbq.edu. The other four colleges and Web sites are Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, Iowa, www.bvu.edu; Hastings College, Hastings, Neb., www.hastings.edu; Jamestown College, Jamestown, N.D., www.jc.edu; and Macalester College, St. Paul, Minn.,

www.macalester.edu. More about Presbyterian colleges and universities can be discovered at www.presbyteriancolleges.org.

4. IOWA RELIGIOUS MEDIA SERVICES ANNOUNCES MOVE: Iowa Religious Media Services (IRMS), the official media center for the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, will move its offices and library Nov. 13 from its 36th Street location in Des Moines to 3116 104th St. in Urbandale, Iowa. Karen Trotman, Washington, Iowa, and JoAnn Selleck, Storm Lake, Iowa, represent the synod on the IRMS board of directors. Trotman also serves on the Preview Committee. The move accomplishes several goals, according to Sharon E. Strohmaier, executive director. "In our new facilities, we can better serve the needs of our clients and be better stewards of our resources. In addition, our new location is ADA compliant, offering improved access for all our clients." IRMS (IRMS) is an ecumenical lending library with over 7900 VHS, DVD, audio and book titles available for use by member organizations. More information about the library can be found at www.irms.org.

5. SYNOD COMMISSIONER TO LEAD 'FAITH AT WORK' WORKSHOP: Tom Pappas, synod commissioner from Homestead Presbytery, and his wife, Laurel Van Ham, will be one of three couples leading a workshop, "Being Together: Called as a Couple," Jan. 25-27 in Chicago. The workshop is being offered by Faith At Work, described in its vision statement as "a leading organization empowering people to explore, discern and act on their many gifts and calls in the complexity of their daily lives for the good of God's world." Couples participating in the workshop can expect "rest, rejuvenation and reconnection to your call as a couple," according to materials in Faith@Work magazine. Registration information can be found at www.faithatwork.com/events/calendar.html.

6. IOWA CITY DELEGATION TO DEDICATE DORM/HOSTEL IN PAKISTAN: Four members of First Presbyterian Church in Iowa City, Iowa, leave for Pakistan Nov. 10 to represent the congregation at the dedication of dormitory/hostel at the Christian Girls School in Pasrur. The congregation contributed \$308,000 to the construction of the dormitory and provided an additional \$22,000 for 50 boarding school scholarships. The Presbyterian schools were confiscated by the Pakistani government in 1972 and returned to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) beginning in 1998. The schools were released in deplorable physical and academic condition. Through the years of the church's Project Pasrur, the congregation has completed several smaller projects, including the construction of a multipurpose building. Additional information, including pictures, can be found at <http://www.firstpresbiowacity.org/pasrurdorm.htm>.

7. GUDER TO SPEAK IN TWIN CITIES IN JANUARY: Darrell Guder, Princeton Theological Seminary's dean of academic affairs and the Henry Winters Luce Professor of Missional and Ecumenical Theology, will preach at the Saturday, Jan. 12, meeting of the Twin Cities Area Presbytery and is also scheduled to speak at an event of Church of All Nations Sunday, Jan. 13, at 7 p.m. More information can be obtained by contacting Jin Kim, pastor of Church of All Nations, at jin@cando.org. The church's Web site is www.cando.org.

8. MINNESOTA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES HEAD GETS NATIONAL POST: The Rev. Peg Chamberlin, executive director of the Minnesota Council of Churches, was elected to the president-elect post of the National Council of Churches at the national organization's annual meeting of its General Assembly in New York Nov. 8. Chamberlin will assume the president's post in November 2009, becoming the first Minnesotan to serve as national president. The National Council of Churches has a constituency of 45 million people in more than 100,000 local congregations in communities across the nation. The National Council's member faith groups include Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox, Evangelical, historic African

American and Living Peace churches. Since its founding in 1950, the National Council of Churches has been the leading force for ecumenical cooperation among Christians in the United States.

9. 2008 MISSION YEARBOOK IS AVAILABLE NOW: The photo depicts a colorful band of believers in a rural village in China with the words superimposed: "Where two or more are gathered." The photo taken by Bob Ellis, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s associate for international health ministries, is emblematic of the rich history of the 2.3-million-member denomination's rich history of mission around the world. And it's the cover photo for the 2008 Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study (www.pcusa.org/missionyearbook) in its 116th year of continuous publication. Published by Witherspoon Press, an imprint of the General Assembly Council's (GAC) Mission Education and Promotion office, it's available now (Item # 1571530835) by ordering online or calling (800) 524-2612. Cost is \$9.25 each or \$8.00 each for 10-24 copies, plus shipping. This story may be seen at <http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07710.htm>.

10. FORMULA OF AGREEMENT STORIES SOUGHT ON ANNIVERSARY: In 1997 the PC(USA) and three other denominations of Reformation heritage entered into a Formula of Agreement that they are in full communion with one another. To commemorate the 10 year anniversary Harold Daniels, a faithful servant of the PC(USA), will be writing an article to be published in Call to Worship. Do you have stories of congregations, presbyteries or synods that have lived into the Agreement? Details should be sent to Daniels at hmdbcw@earthlink.net by Nov. 16.

11. CHARLES H. COOK FOUNDATION TO BE LAUNCHED: The Trustees of Cook School for Christian Leadership recently approved the recommendation of the Strategic Planning Committee to create the Charles H. Cook Foundation. The decision, made at the board meeting in October, was the culmination of a six-month study which explored many options, including significant conceptual designs to renovate and rebuild the campus. The study eventually focused on what was needed to continue the rich tradition of Native ministry, and ensure financial stability while continuing to fulfill the mission of "empowering Native Americans for leadership in churches and communities." The rest of the story can be found at www.cookleadershipschool.org/pressRelease.asp.

12. LAPTOP COMPUTERS – GET 1-GIVE 1: Are you or your congregations looking for a meaningful present to give at Christmas? Here's an idea: Starting Nov. 12 the organization "One Laptop Per Child" is offering a special offer to non-profits that might be of interest to your congregations and their members. The organization's Web site notes that it " will be offering a Give 1 Get 1 Program for a brief window of time in North America. For \$399, you will be purchasing two XO laptops – one that will be sent to empower a child to learn in a developing nation, and one that will be sent to your child at home." The details are at www.laptopgiving.org.

13. TAX TIPS OFFERED FOR CHURCHES AND PASTORS: The Board of Pensions is offering a teleconference for pastors and churches on tax tips for filing 2007 taxes. The call will be Dec. 13 at 2 p.m. CST. Those interested in participating in "Tax Tips for Ministers and Churches" should call 1.800.355.4487. *Registration is limited and closes on Nov. 19.* The conference call will last about an hour. Registrants will receive a reminder with access instructions for the teleconference by email the day before the teleconference. A replay of the event will be available on www.pensions.org in early January.

14. BOARD OF PENSIONS PORTFOLIO TOPS \$8 BILLION: With a 9.6 percent return through the first three-quarters of 2007, the investment portfolio of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Board of Pensions topped the \$8 billion mark for the first time. The gain for the year-to-date is \$738 million, vice-president for finance Mike Fallon told the board at its October meeting in Scottsdale, Ariz. This story may be seen at <http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07718.htm>.

15. APCE SETS ANNUAL EVENT IN FEBRUARY IN SAN DIEGO: The Association of Presbyterian Church Educators will conduct its annual event, "But God Says ... " Feb. 13-16 in San Diego, Calif. The conference will "explore teaching for transformation, renewing minds and hearts and bodies, and discerning God's will for the present and future of Christ's church." Rodger Nishioka, associate professor of Christian education at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Ga., will be the keynote speaker. Additional information about the event can be found at <http://apcenet.org/events/annual-next.htm>.

16. BURNED-DOWN MALIBU CHURCH VOWS TO RISE FROM ASHES: For Nancy Little, visiting the charred ruins of Malibu Presbyterian Church strengthened her faith and brought her closer to God. Little and her husband, Braxton, are longtime members of the former white-steepled church that had been a fixture in the seaside celebrity enclave near Los Angeles for over half a century. ... But in the early morning of Oct. 21 embers from a fast-moving wildfire, stoked by fierce Santa Ana winds, caught the church's steeple, then the attic, on fire. The 60-year-old house of worship burned to the ground in minutes. ... The Littles and others from Malibu Presbyterian said that while their building was destroyed by fire, they didn't lose their church. Malibu Presbyterian is made up of the people who worship there, not the building that houses them, they said. This story, photos and photo album can be found at <http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07723.htm>.

17. PDA SENDS FUNDS TO MEXICO TO HELP FLOOD VICTIMS: Hoping to ease suffering from one of Mexico's largest natural disasters in recent history, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) has sent \$30,000 in aid to the flood-soaked state of Tabasco. The money, from One Great Hour of Sharing and designated funds, was forwarded to the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico (INPM) to purchase bottled water, food and bedding for emergency shelters. Six INPM presbyteries are housing more than 1,000 people forced from their homes in Tabasco after days of heavy rains last week put most of the low-lying, oil-rich state under several feet of water. Some 1.3 million people have been directly affected by flooding with major damage to water and sanitation infrastructure, crops and livestock, according to a PDA situation report issued Nov. 6. This full story can be found at <http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07730.htm>.

18. HOUSER DISTRIBUTES NOTE AFTER RETURN FROM FIRE ZONE: The following is a note written by the Rev. Bob Houser, executive presbyter of the Presbytery of Central Nebraska and a response team member of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance in southern California. The Rev. Houser wrote this note Nov. 5 after his return.

Please remember the folks in California and Mexico in your prayers as they recover from disasters.

As many of you know, I spent about five days in San Bernardino and Lake Arrowhead, Calif., helping plan the recovery to the fires in that area. Things went surprisingly well, primarily because they had suffered a fire four short years ago. The organization that was put in place to respond to that fire was still in place and active in rebuilding homes four

years later. They feel their response is four months ahead of the schedule of four years ago. I visited with a 9-year-old girl who was a bit anxious to return to her home. Four years ago they had been told that their home had been destroyed in the fire but it hadn't. This time the word was that their home was safe but she wasn't ready to believe that until she got home and saw it for herself.

One Presbyterian congregation in the San Diego area had 57 members of their congregation lose their home in the fire. It is impossible for me to imagine what the impact of such a loss would be on the congregation let alone those families. Of course we also know that the Presbyterian Church in Malibu, Calif., was destroyed by fire. It is PDA's hope that it will raise a million dollars to respond to the disaster in California.

When visiting with the session and deacons of the Lake Arrowhead Presbyterian Church I was struck by their response. The money that might be coming their way to help with the recovery was wonderful, but the thing that made the biggest impact on them was that the national church had sent actual people to them. They didn't remember seeing anyone from the church after the fire four years ago. Another question that was asked of us was how do we get deployed. Both Tom and I said we didn't know other than John went to the phone and started calling. In this particular case we could see God's providence in how that played out. Tom and the pastor at Lake Arrowhead had been in the same presbytery for a number of years and the student intern was from Nebraska City, Neb. Both of us had a connecting point with the pastors that were going to bear the major brunt of the response effort.