

OCTOBER 26, 2009

The synod can be found online at www.lakesandprairies.org.
Also check out the Presbyterian Neighborhood at <http://lakesprairies.pnnews.org>.

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1. SYNOD'S SDOP COMMITTEE EXTENDS DEADLINE FOR GRANT REQUESTS:

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies' Self-Development of People Committee extended its 2009 deadline to receive grant proposals to Nov. 20. The intention of SDOP grants is to help correct conditions that keep people bound by poverty and oppression. Grant requests must be presented, owned and controlled by the group of people who will benefit from the grant. Proposals must describe the goal of the project, specific steps required to accomplish the goal, a description of how the benefited group will be in charge of the project, and the other sources of support that are involved. Elona Street-Stewart, synod associate for racial ethnic ministries and community empowerment, wrote, "Here is a wonderful opportunity for community groups to make an impact on people's lives and change the negative effects of poverty, unemployment, and homelessness. SDOP is especially interested in areas with greater potential to partner with immigrant communities, racial ethnic organizations and high incidences of poverty." Additional information can be obtained by contacting Street-Stewart at estreetstewart@lakesandprairies.org. ([Return to top](#))

2. THREE CHURCHES RECEIVE 'UNASSIGNED FUND' GRANTS:

Three churches in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies received grants through unassigned funds of the General Assembly Mission Council. Knox Presbyterian Church, St. Paul, Minn., received \$1,274 on behalf of the St. Paul Area Council of Churches to continue work with Native American health education. Olivet Presbyterian Church, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, received \$781 for the Olivet Neighborhood Mission, and Olive Presbyterian Church, Platte, S.D., received \$500 to help support the Eagle Nest Life Center. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Web site contains information pertaining to the grant process for " [Unassigned Funds](#)." ([Return to top](#))

3. CAMBRIA CHURCH PLANS TO 'PAY IT FORWARD':

The 150th anniversary team of First Presbyterian Church in Cambria, Wis., is eager to 'pay it forward' and help another congregation celebrate a special anniversary. When the Cambria church celebrated its anniversary this year, the planning team noted a special gift that contributed to its success: a \$500 gift from First Presbyterian Church in Algona, Iowa. The Algona church had celebrated its sesquicentennial in 2008. The complete story can be found at " [Cambria](#)." ([Return to top](#).)



4. SMALL CHANGE MAKES BIG CHANGE FOR ZAMBIAN CHILDREN:

Once a month during worship, children from Covenant Presbyterian Church, Racine, Wis., (see Covenant children at left) bring their coins to the large

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basket on the communion table as their donation to the [Alliance for Children Everywhere's](#) Change for Children Program. ACE is a U.S. based Christian charity that provides group homes for children in Zambia who have been orphaned, often due to HIV/AIDS. The complete story can be found at "[Zambia.](#)" ([Return to top](#))



**5. NISHIOKA IS
CONVOCATION SPEAKER
FOR 2010 SYNOD**

SCHOOL: Rodger Nishioka, associate professor of Christian education at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Ga., will be the convocation speaker for Synod School 2010. The theme for the week-long event is "Grace Notes." Synod School 2010

dates are Sunday afternoon, July 25, through Friday noon, July 30. Synod School, an education ministry of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, takes place at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa. The complete story can be found at "[Synod School.](#)" ([Return to top](#))

**6. DAKOTA PRESBYTERY ELECTS CLERK,
APPROVES PARISH:**

[Dakota Presbytery](#) elected Billy Kohl of Peever, S.D., as stated clerk when the presbytery met earlier this month. Kohl replaces the Rev. Simon Looking Elk. In other action, the presbytery voted to approve the participation of Bdecan Presbyterian Church, Tokio, N.D., in Lake Region Presbyterian Parish. Bdecan Presbyterian is a congregation of Dakota Presbytery. Other parish churches, all congregations of the Presbytery of Northern Plains, are Westminster Presbyterian Church, Devils Lake, N.D., First Presbyterian Church, Minnewaukan, N.D., and Webster (N.D.) Chapel. The parish had been approved by the Presbytery of Northern Plains in January 2006. According to the bylaws of the parish, the "emphasis throughout is on establishing collaborative ministries, both within the parish and throughout the Lake Region." ([Return to top](#))

7. NORTH CENTRAL IOWA PLANS TEXAS WORK

TRIP: The Presbytery of North Central Iowa, along with its congregations, is planning a mission work trip to Galveston, Texas, in January to assist in the recovery from Hurricane Ike. According to the presbytery's newsletter, at least 25 volunteers are sought. Additional information about the trip can be obtained by contacting David Feltman, presbytery executive, or Vicki Thordsen, secretary, at 319.233.1747 or 800.383.3617. They can also be reached by email at dfeltman@presbynciowa.org or vthordsen@presbynciowa.org. ([Return to top](#))



8. STREET-STEWART NOMINATED FOR NATIONAL AWARD: Elona Street-Stewart, vice chair of the [St. Paul \(Minn.\) Public School District](#), is a finalist for the 2009 Richard R. Green Award presented by the [Council of the Great City Schools](#). Street-Stewart is associate for racial ethnic ministries and community empowerment for the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. Kazoua Kong-Thao, chair of the school board, said, "Elona's leadership has been an invaluable asset for our district over the past six years. Additionally, she has been a great role model and a resource with her experience as an active parent, community leader and past board chair." CGCS, with headquarters in Washington, D.C., is a coalition of 66 of the nation's largest urban public school systems. The award

honors current or past council board members who represent support of and service to urban schoolchildren, development of a special service or program in support of urban school needs, ongoing contributions to urban education through advocacy or programs and inspiration and motivation of others to contribute to success of urban school students. ([Return to top](#))

PNNews.org

9. WHAT'S 'PRESBYTERIAN NEIGHBOR NEWS:' Yes, there is a Presbyterian Neighbor News. In fact, a number of articles in this issue of Keeping in Touch are linked to it. Presbyterian Neighbor News (or PNNews) has been slowly

growing since 2008. According to publicity at <http://pnnews.org>, PNNews "is a network where existing news sources can merge to be even more useful and easier to navigate for Presbyterians everywhere." News at the site is organized by synods (the Synod of Lakes and Prairies is at <http://lakesprairies.pnnews.org>). In recent weeks, some of the stories on the Lakes and Prairies edition have included an articles on Synod School 2010, constitutional award winner from Winnebago Presbytery, church activities in East Iowa, John Knox and Milwaukee presbyteries, and a Minnesota Valleys Presbytery pastor in a "Faster Pastor" racing feature. Subscribing to PNNews is easy. In the upper left hand corner of the Lakes and Prairies edition, click on the "Learn more/join" button and follow the directions. ([Return to top](#))



10. RECONCILIATION IS HEART OF MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN MINISTRY: "How many of you are afraid of Muslims?" asked Bernie Adeney-Risakotta, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) mission worker to Indonesia, during an adult education class at St. Andrew Presbyterian Church in Iowa City, Iowa. From the class of 30 adults one brave man raised his hand, and Adeney-Risakotta suggested the fear we may feel when seeing a Muslim in Arab dress is "the very fear that may prevent us from establishing relationships with Muslims and finding common ground between Islam and Christianity." (At left are Farsijana and Bernie Adeney-Risakotta.) The complete story can be found at "[Reconciliation](#)." ([Return to top](#))



11. MISSION WORKER HELPS THOSE DISPLACED BY TSUNAMI, WAR: From the outside, Sri Lanka is beautiful. The tear-drop shaped island nation, about the size of West Virginia and located off the southeast coast of India, is a wonderful place, with its mostly tropical climate, beautiful beaches and national parks, an array of wildlife and a diverse landscape that ranges from lowlands to hills to its highest peak above 8,000 feet. But it's been an island of tragedy in recent years. The Christmastime tsunami of 2004 killed thousands and a vicious civil war terrorized the island for decades until it came to an end this spring. Sri Lanka is the mission ground for Chenoa Stock (at right), who visited the Presbytery of Prospect Hill earlier this month and stopped at United Presbyterian Church in Denison, Iowa. The complete story can be found at "[Sri Lanka](#)." Her visit is also noted in the presbytery [newsletter](#). ([Return to top](#))

12. NORTHERN IRELAND MISSION WORKER WORRIES ABOUT COMPLACENCY: Reports of violence in Northern Ireland are no longer frequent in today's international news, but the relative peace is fragile in the land where violence plagued the streets and countryside only a decade ago. The Rev. Doug Baker (at right) brings that message when he speaks about his work in Northern Ireland the need to support the worl mission work of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). "There's a relatively low level of violence now," Baker said. "But the problems are still there, the polarization." The complete story can be found at "[Northern Ireland](#)." ([Return to top](#))



13. ONLINE CLASS COULD HELP CHANGE CONGREGATIONAL SPIRIT: John Ackerman noted the football cheer: "We have spirit, yes we do! We have spirit, how about you?" and added he has often wished his congregation could cheer about the Holy Spirit. Ackerman, who has served more than 40 years as a Presbyterian pastor, is offering an online class that can help, as he noted, "change the 'spirit' of the congregation." The class will run six months from January to June. The complete story can be found at "[congregational spirit.](#)" ([Return to top](#))



14. CONFERENCE SLATED ON OVERCOMING RACISM: A conference designed to advance antiracism leadership and practice, called "Overcoming Racism: Why is it so Hard?" is slated Friday and Saturday, Nov. 6-7, at William Mitchell College of Law in St. Paul, Minn. The conference will offer resources to expand the understanding and improve skills in countering racism. The Synod of Lakes and Prairies and Macalester College, one of seven Presbyterian-affiliated colleges and universities with the synod, are two of several conference partners. Conference [information](#) and [registration materials](#) can be found online.



15. PRESBYTERIES, RESOURCE CENTERS GET 'SOUL SEARCHING' VIDEO: "Soul Searching: a Movie about Teenagers and God" looks into the core beliefs of teens and the video is being sent to presbytery offices and resource centers throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by the [Office of Ministries with Youth](#). The 77-minute video is based on the book, "Soul Searching: The Religious and spiritual Lives of American Teenagers," published by [Oxford University Press](#), which reports on research conducted by the [National Study of Youth and Religion](#). Gina Yeager-Buckley, associate for Ministries with Youth, wrote, "As a result of [the Youth Committee of the 218th General Assembly's] hard work and inspiration several recommendations were made to the whole Assembly. To send the DVD ... was one of those recommendations." The packet containing the video also includes several versions of a study guide. ([Return to top](#))

16. MCC INVITES PUBLIC TO CHEMBERLIN'S INSTALLATION AS NCC PRESIDENT: The Minnesota council of Churches is inviting the public to the closing event of the National Council of Churches/Church World Service General Assembly at which the Rev. Peg Chamberlin, MCC executive director, will be installed as the NCC's 25th president. The event takes place Thursday, Nov. 12, with a banquet at 5 p.m. in St. Louis Park, Minn., and worship at 7:30 p.m. at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, 519 Oak Grove St., Minneapolis. Additional information is available at the [MCC Web site](#). ([Return to top](#))



17. IRMS NEWSLETTER TO FEATURE IOWA CE, YOUTH DIRECTOR: Karen Trotman, Christian education and youth director at United Presbyterian Church, Washington, Iowa, will be featured in the November issue of "eNews," published by Iowa Religious Media Services, a resource center supported by the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. Trotman will talk about her usage of the multi-part resource "Faith Lessons," explaining why she uses it and how to make it work easily for middle school through adult groups. Those who do not subscribe to IRMS' "eNews" can do so by sending an email to the editor at jwrite@ecity.net and noting "'eNews' subscribe" in the subject line. The email should include name, church, city and church relationship, such as minister, lay or other position. ([Return to top](#))



18. PDA SEEKS REBUILDING FUNDS IN RESPONSE TO HURRICAN IKE: Most people have forgotten about Hurricane Ike. It was that storm that came ashore on the Texas coast during the 2008 elections, missed New Orleans and was downgraded to a category 2. For the most part, news coverage and the public moved on to other things. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is appealing for others to remember Hurricane Ike. One year after the storm, less than \$300,000 has been received to assist families who lost their homes. Videos regarding the "Forgotten Storm" are available on the [PDA Web site](#). ([Return to top](#))

19. TOLLEFSON LECTURES SET AT BVU: The Rev. J. Andrew Dearman, director of the Fuller Seminary-Houston extension, will present the 2009 Robert and Barbara Tollefson lectures at Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, Iowa, Nov. 9. The Robert and Barbara Tollefson Reformed Theology Lectureship began in 1992 in recognition of the Tollefsons' contributions to the university. The complete story and contact information can be found at "[Tollefson.](#)" ([Return to top](#))

20. MACALESTER COLLEGE GETS HIGH MARKS FOR SUSTAINABILITY: Macalester College, one of seven Presbyterian-affiliated institutions of higher education within the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, was among 26 schools nationwide to score an A- on a [national report card](#) that measures colleges' sustainability efforts. A recent editorial in the [Star Tribune](#) newspaper, Minneapolis, noted several sustainability efforts, concluding that

"where these schools lead, others follow." ([Return to top](#))

21. BOARD OF PENSIONS SLATES TAX TIPS WEBINAR: Intended to answer questions related to current tax law, the Board of Pensions has scheduled an online class, "Tax Tips Webinar for Ministers and Churches," Wednesday, Dec. 9. Event details and registration are available online through the [Board of Pensions](#). Registration ends Nov. 20. ([Return to top](#))

22. NEW MISSION GIVING MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED: New 2009-2010 mission giving opportunities packets were recently mailed to each Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregation and middle governing body. The materials should have arrived in early October. The packets have been designed to help strengthen the church's shared witness and encourage greater participation at all levels in the mission of the church. Middle governing body executives were invited to provide input on the materials during Web meetings. The complete story can be found at "[Mission giving](#)." ([Return to top](#))



23. PC(USA) YAV PROGRAM OFFERS NATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL OPTIONS: The Young Adult Volunteer Program of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) offers opportunities to serve in communities of need nationally and internationally. The program, open to people ages 19 to 30, requires a commitment of one academic year. The application deadline is Jan. 20 for the 2010-2011 year. In addition to service, the program emphasizes living in intentional Christian community and spiritual formation. The PC(USA) Web site contains more information about the [YAV Program](#). ([Return to top](#))

24. ONLINE BIBLE CONTENT EXAM DECLARED SUCCESS: Continued advances in Internet technology have made it possible for the Bible content examination, one of the five standard examinations required for ordination to the ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), to be offered online for the first time. A total of 138 inquirers and candidates, at 32 proctored testing sites across the United States, successfully registered for and completed the online examination Oct. 2 through the use of a new Internet-based testing program. "All in all, I'd say it was a big success," said Catherine Davis, a proctor at the Princeton Theological Seminary testing site. The complete story can be found at "[Bible content](#)." ([Return to top](#))

25. PC(USA) SOCIAL MEDIA SITE WINS AWARD: [AllWomen in the church](#), the social media site launched in March 2009 by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), has been honored with a "Landmarks of Excellence Award of Merit" from the Louisville (Ky.) chapters of the International Association of Business Communicators and the Public Relations Society of America. The award went to PC(USA) Web content developer Dana McMahan and Web designer Thommy Browne. AllWomen seeks to reach out to women across the denomination. More than 500 members participate. AllWomen is part of the Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries/Presbyterian Women ministry area. ([Return to top](#))

26. PC(USA) LEADERS ANNOUNCE ANOTHER 'BIG TENT:' Noting the success of the first-ever "Big Tent," a collection of 10 individual conferences of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Atlanta in June, denominational leaders noted this month that a second "Big Tent" is planned in 2011. Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons and Linda Valentine, executive director of the General Assembly Mission Council, wrote earlier this month, "Perhaps no other gathering of Presbyterians has captured such a spirit of enthusiasm and inspiration like the Big Tent. To have the opportunity to share stories and ideas without a legislative agenda was refreshing and rejuvenating to the soul and a great reminder of the richness of this denomination." Their letter noted, "We are very happy to announce that the Big Tent will return in 2011. The dates and location will be announced in the coming months." ([Return to top](#))

27. IOWA TRAPPIST MONKS OFFER UNIQUE URNS, CASKETS: This isn't to imply at this moment that any "Keeping in Touch" reader is in the market for a casket or urn, but the synod has been made aware of [Trappist Caskets](#). The caskets and urns are the work of the monks of [New Melleray Abbey](#), a Cistercian (Trappist) monastery located south of Dubuque, Iowa. The monks support themselves by farming and making handcrafted wooden caskets and urns. The caskets and urns are available for immediate shipment. Delivery can be made in one or two business days, or overnight when necessary. ([Return to top](#))