

The Wider Circle

Presbytery of Des Moines 515-276-4991 / April 2006 Vol. 2, Issue 4



*Equipping pastors and congregations
with the tools to carry on God's awesome love.*

Of Special Interest

Sudanese in Des Moines
Remember Kin

SW Regional Partnership
Mission Trip Update

Planning Calendar Order Form

IRMS 20th Anniversary Invite

Contents

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| Des Moines Sudanese | 1 |
| Phil's Corner | 1 |
| Earth Day Sunday | 2 |
| Events Calendar | 2 |
| PC(USA) Update | 4 |
| New PC(USA) Websites | 4 |
| Synod School | 5 |
| I-Cubs Help DMARC | 6 |
| Congregation Connection | 6 |
| Prayer and Concerns | 6 |
| Order Planning Calendars | 7 |
| Employment Opportunities | 7 |
| Summer Online Courses | 8 |
| Presbytery Happenings | 8 |
| Transformation Moments | 8 |
| Clifton Heights Invite | 11 |
| Advocacy Websites | 10 |
| CROSS Ministries Update | 10 |
| El Salvador Mission Hope | 10 |
| IRMS Anniversary Invite | 11 |
| LeRoy PC Invite | 11 |
| Web Site for Your Church | 11 |

Sudanese Remember Long-lost Kin, Share in a Special Kind of Resurrection

DES MOINES PASTOR HAS FLOCK THAT WORSHIPS, GRIEVES IN MANY LANGUAGES

by Alexa Smith

PC(USA) News Service
April 7, 2006

DES MOINES — Rev.

Dave Madsen is preparing a memorial service for someone he doesn't know. All he knows is that the person died somewhere in Africa, and someone here misses her — or him; he isn't sure which.

It doesn't matter. He's officiating at a ritual that defies time and distance to help a fragmented community celebrate ties that still bind. That bind, perhaps, to eternity.

Madsen is pastor of

Cottage Grove Presbyterian Church in

Des Moines, Ia., where about 100 midwesterners gather every Sunday morning for an English-language service. But they're the minority now.

About 125 transplanted Sudanese Christians fill out the English-language service and jam two others, one in Mabaan, one of the 300 languages spoken in southern Sudan, and another in Arabic, the language of Sudan's north.

No matter how long you've been gone, Sudan is still home," says 36-year-old Dhan Kueth, a member of Madsen's flock who arrived in the United States in 1993 after reluctantly leaving his

family. "Mom, Dad, your brothers ... they may be still there. And if you are here, you do whatever you can to be a good son, as if you were back there. You do your part here as if you were back home."

Hence the memorials. The prayers in Arabic. The testimonies in Dinka, another southern tongue. A sermon in English. And then food. Lots of it. All for someone they might remember from a long-ago life, or might never have met at all.

If any immigrant community understands death and resurrection, it is the Sudanese, who have been arriving in the United States since the early 1990s,

continued on page 3

Phil's Corner



As we approach observance of the world's most important

event, it is interesting that a lot of excitement has been generated in the academic, archaeological and faith communities over the discovery of an old but new gospel — the Gospel of Judas.

Carbon dating has verified its early origins. What is has not verified is its accuracy. It will be difficult for many Christians to accept as the Gospel makes the case that Jesus asked Judas to betray him. However, one scholar — from Princeton — suggests that, from what she has read of this Gospel, our faith is strengthened, not

weakened by what we learn from this now document.

As I have muddled through watching and reading about this new discovery, I couldn't help but think back to the continuing fascination with another artifact — the Shroud of Turin. Did the Shroud actually wrap around

continued on page 5



Earth Day Sunday is April 23

The storm surge that breached the levee system protecting New Orleans also shattered our illusions about poverty, race, and environmental issues. This year's Earth Day focuses on the devastating environmental impact that Hurricanes Katrina and Rita brought to the Gulf Coast and how people of faith can respond. As Christians, we are called to see the connection between our care for God's creation and all of God's people. The Presbyterian Environmental Justice Office provides a variety of resources for Earth Day observances. Go to: www.pcusa.org/environment/earthday.htm.

Events Calendar

2006

April 19-22 – Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network (POAMN) Annual Conference, *Passion for People*, Stony Point, NY, www.StonyPointCenter.org. "A Passion for People" will go back to the basic premises of Presbyterian ministry, mission and evangelism. Keynote is Rev. Stephen Sapp and Tom and Susie Tickner are the worship leaders. Go to: www.pcusa.org/olderadults/poamn, or call 800-253-4285.

April 20 – Two Rivers Regional Partnership Adult Ministries

Committee will meet at 11 a.m. at Perkins on 86th St., Des Moines to set date of annual fall bus trip. For details, contact **Yvonne Scott**, 515-285-5710 or **Larry Milroy**, 515-255-6860.

April 20-22 – Presbyterian Communicators Network in St. Louis, sponsored by PC (USA). For details, go to: www.pcusa.org/comnet/.

April 21-22 – *The CORE 2006*, sponsored by Youth Specialties and the **Ankeny Presbyterian Church**. The two-day event is at the **Ankeny Presbyterian Church**, 317 S.E. Trilein Dr., Ankeny, Ia., On Friday, 7-9 p.m., a gathering will be held for Presbyterian youth workers to hear a report from the 2005 National Youth Workers Retreat in Reno, Nev., brainstorm ideas on

how to work together and plan events for future youth workers. On Saturday, 8:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m., *the Core 2006*, a "Youth Specialties" training event for youth workers will take place. Register online at www.youthspecialties.com. Questions? Contact **Mary Kohlsdorf** in Ankeny at 515-964-0264.

April 24-28 – *28th Annual Seminar on Local Church History*, sponsored by the Presbyterian Historical Society at its facility in Montreat, N.C. For information, contact the Society at 215-627-1852, e-mail refdesk@history.pcusa.org or www.history.pcusa.org/cong/lchs/index.htm.

April 26-28 – *Presbyterians Seeking Purpose-Driven Ministry*, 4th Annual Conference, Trinity Presbyterian Church, Satellite Beach, Fla. (near Orlando and Kennedy Space Center). This event highlights how Presbyterian churches are adapting insights from Rick Warren's book *The Purpose Driven Church*, without compromising distinctive PC (USA) core values. Gain valuable insights into intentional church ministry. For an online brochure and registration, go to: www.purposedrivenpresbyteriansnetwork.net/ or call 321-777-2047.

April 28 – *A Festival of Preaching: Retool, Rethink,*

Re-imagine, sponsored by the Central Baptist Theological Seminary. The one-day event will be held at St. Andrew Christian Church, Olathe, Kansas. Registration deadline is April 21. Cost is \$30 and includes lunch. To register, contact Shirley Wallace, 913-371-5313, ext. 11, or e-mail at: pastorsday@cbs.edu.

April 30 – *The Covenant Continues: 1986-2006*, Iowa Religious Media Services celebrates it's 20th Anniversary and **the Presbytery of Des Moines is invited**. Festivities begin at 2:30 p.m., at Glen Echo Christian Church, 4323 Douglas Ave., Des Moines and will parade to IRMS. Make reservations at 515-277-2920 or e-mail sharon@irms.org.

April 30-May 3 – Synod Meeting, Farmington, Minn.

April 25-May 2 – Pastor/Spouse/Elder Familiarization Tour to Jordan (Also, May 9-16, and Sept. 9-16, 2006) These tours are organized by Arthur W. Murphy, a member of National Capital Presbytery. Sponsored by Friends of Jordan (a group of pastors from the National Capital and surrounding presbyteries).

May 1-2 – *Quake 2006: Rethinking Church in a Post-Modern World*, sponsored by the Lord of Life Church in Ramsey, Minn. Cost is \$215 and includes sessions and select meals. To register call 763-427-1058 or go to: www.LOL.org.

Des Moines Sudanese continued from page 1

fleeing a horrific war that has killed or displaced more than 4 million people, more than half of the population in the rural south.

Villages have been burned by the hundreds. Livestock has been stolen. Families have been decimated in a systematic, brutal campaign that included the use of hunger as a military strategy, resulting in widespread famine.

A military rebellion was ignited when Khartoum tried to force southerners to assimilate to Arab culture and Islam. The magnitude of the Sudanese *diaspora* is stunning.

Take Thot Thoat, for instance. He is a Presbyterian from Lincoln, Neb. In 1995, at age 37, he immigrated to the United States by way of Ethiopia and Kenya. Two of his brothers had fought in the war, and both had been killed. At 15, Thoat fled to avoid conscription into the ranks of either the Sudanese military or the rebel forces.

His folks stayed behind, to see their town burnt to the ground. "There's nothing left. The land. The people," Thoat says, adding that his parents have long since died. He still has a sister in Kenya. Another in Ethiopia. But he has two nieces, ages 15 and 17, in Ethiopia, alone. Their mother has gone back to Sudan to start over. The nieces want to come here, but that takes

money and earning the money takes time.

His tale isn't atypical. Talk to any Sudanese refugee. They have cousins in Ethiopia, where the first streams of refugees headed for camps, fleeing burning towns, enforced famine and mass murder. The most publicized ones were called the Lost Boys, young orphaned refugees who watched their brothers, sisters and friends die on the long trek east to camps in Kenya or Ethiopia, sometimes covering more than 1,000 miles on foot.

Chased out of Ethiopia by troops, some were eaten by wild animals. Many died of sickness and fatigue. Some of the fortunate ones were resettled by the Red Cross or the United Nations, some in the United States.

Others are stuck still in Kenya. Or in Chad, where more than 200,000 Sudanese recently fled Arab militias combing the eastern province of Darfur. Others are just unaccounted for.

There are very few intact families in southern Sudan. Which is why Madsen stays on call. Saturday morning, his pews will be packed with people from South Dakota, Rochester, San Diego, and who knows where else — all honoring someone who died in Africa, someone they may remember from a long time

ago, or someone they never knew.

We're still the first generation here. We haven't lost our culture yet. We're the people who witnessed the war ... and we're still missing relatives, cousins," says Kueth, noting that most Sudanese try to congregate near relatives.

Arrivals here check Red Cross and government lists for familiar names. Names of missing kids. "If someone is looking for a person ... the message will go round to see if anybody may know that individual," says Kueth, whose own family is far-flung.

Some come together in new families, forging close bonds with folks in the camps. But there is no end to the longing for blood relatives, Kueth says.

His own parents are still in Sudan. Other relatives live in Khartoum, Sudan's dusty capital city in the Sahara. Some are in Ethiopia, some in Kenya, some in Canada, some in Australia. (He doubts if he'll ever see the cousins in Australia because the airfare is outrageous.)

"A friend of mine just learned that his mother is still alive," Kueth says excitedly. "He met a friend last Sunday who just talked to his Mom. He hasn't seen her in 25 years. See, some Sudanese may not know that someone is still alive unless someone says, 'You know what?'"

Madsen, shaking his head in wonder, says: "They credit God with giving them the strength to survive. They credit God with giving them rejuvenated hope for the future."

He said Sudanese women didn't know what menopause was until they heard about it an unheard of reality back home that they heard about through television commercials. Most women back home don't live long enough to reach that stage. Sudanese in America have double the life span of those in Sudan.

Because the Presbyterian church has old and well-maintained ties to Sudan, many refugees arrived here looking for Presbyterian churches. In Des Moines, a group told the nun who'd help them resettle that, while the Catholic church had been kind, they were Presbyterians.

"She just said, 'Of course you are.' And then she called me," says Madsen, who admits that he knew nothing of Sudan or its people then. Or even why they were refugees.

Now, he can say simple prayers in languages he never knew existed: Dinka. Nuer. Mabaan. Shiluck.

Perhaps it's all a preview of the *eschaton*.

"I knew nothing," he says of his old self. "God works in mysterious ways."



Did You Know?

Two new websites reflecting the PC(USA)'s commitment to racial-ethnic diversity are now up and running on the denomination's website.

www.pcusa.org/diversity is dedicated to multicultural ministry for multicultural churches which incorporate the cultural traditions and dimensions of more than one ethnic or racial group.

www.pcusa.org/asianamerican is dedicated to Asian-American ministry and supports the Office of Congregational Leadership's goal of developing leadership in Asian-American Presbyterian churches.

Both sites will be tools to inspire and equip Presbyterians to minister to people from a variety of races and cultures.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Update

HELP NAME THE ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING FISH

What Fish? – Over the last several decades, while One Great Hour of Sharing themes and posters have come and gone, the one unchanging presence for all but a few years in the late 1990's has been the coin box in the shape of a fish... sound familiar?

Beginning next year, the coin box will not be the only fish in the sea of One Great Hour of Sharing resources, making its debut in the year's children's material is a new character, a little fish called ... we don't know its name is yet, so we're just calling it the "Little Fish". It will be up to the kids in Sunday school classes to participate in a contest to find a name for the Little Fish.

How to Submit a Name–

For each name that you wish to submit, send a card or letter to: Name the Fish, c/o One Great Hour of Sharing, 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY 40202 -1396. Or send an e-mail with the words "Name the Fish Contest" in the subject line, to: akrome@ctr.pcusa.org. All suggestions must be submitted before May 31, 2006.

Names will be judged on the basis of creativity and appropriateness. If there is a special reason your class chose a particular name, feel

free to include it, the judges may be swayed by it. If more than one class submits the winning name, up to five classes will be declared winners. The winners will receive a large stuffed version of the fish coin box.

BOARD OF PENSIONS INFO

There has been a computer glitch at Board of Pensions. The computer was not adding up the deductibles on medical visits. It would only show at the bottom what was applied to the deductible for that visit. They are having to re-process all claims for this year. In addition, at times they didn't pay 100% on one of the preventative tests that are to be covered fully. Everyone needs to check their statements of benefits carefully.

RURAL MINISTRIES LAUNCHES NEW WEB SITE

The Rural Ministries Network launched a new Web site with the mission to support rural PC(USA) congregations by advocating for, and lifting up rural ministry. This site at www.pcusa.org/rural provides network and grant opportunities, resources, action items, congregational success stories and information about events such as Rural Life Sunday and WeeKirk conferences.

GRANTS AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT RURAL COMMUNITIES

As rural communities change, some decreasing in population while others are

growing, many are facing serious economic crisis. Vital rural congregations of the PC(USA) are collaborating with other congregations and groups in their community to envision, design, and implement new projects/programs that will contribute to the renewal and rebuilding of community life.

The General Assembly of the PC(USA) has acted to support such collaborative efforts through "The Church: Responding to Rural America," a report approved by the 203rd General Assembly (1991) and "We Are What We Eat," a report approved by the 214th General Assembly (2003).

This grant program is administered by the Rural Ministry Network office, Evangelism and Witness program are, National Ministries Division, PC(USA).

Application deadlines are Aug. 1. More information to include criteria and guidelines for the grants is available at: www.pcusa.org/rural/grants.htm

THEOLOGICAL TASK FORCE MEMBERS OFFER REFLECTIONS ON THEIR FINAL REPORT

The *Peace, Unity and Purity Task Force Report* and task force member reflections are available online at:

www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2006/06165.htm.

Take a Vacation at Synod School!

Did you know Synod School is a great, affordable family vacation that will enrich your life and increase your circle of friends?

Last year, 40 different classes were offered as well as many diverse extracurricular activities ranging from Star Trek Bible study, greek dancing, tie dying and fly fishing.

At last year's Synod School you could have met:

- 509 people (469 Presbyterians – U.S. and Canadian – 12 Methodists, 9 Roman Catholics and 19 others who were either a United Church of Christ, Jewish, Assemblies of God, Reformed Church, or

Evangelical Lutheran Church of America).

- These folks came from 157 different towns in 12 states and two Canadian provinces with 185 attending Synod School for the first time.
- 100 children, two age one or under and 53 in grades 7-12.
- 94 clergy, 16 of whom had been ordained in the last four years and 24 who were from outside the bounds of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.

And that doesn't even include the 45 people who staffed the children and youth programs or the 54 teachers for the adult classes, a dozen musicians,



and many, many volunteers, among others!

Get event and registration information online at: www.lakesandprairies.org/SynodSchool2006.html.

Phil's Corner continued from page 1

Christ's body? Scientists are still arguing about it. Should this ever be scientifically proven, it will be history's greatest find.

But who needs the shroud to confirm faith in the resurrection? In Mark's Gospel the shaken, astonished women didn't even look closely at the tomb. They took off.

You see, what we Christians believe is that the risen Christ does not inhabit any shroud, and his grave is empty. That's the glorious message of Easter Sunday.

"He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him," God's messenger told the women – and you and me. Galilee is the home country, the place of our everyday life. We meet the risen savior whenever we worship with brothers and sisters. He speaks to us through the Word.

However, it seems to me that we encounter Christ best when we try to mend broken hearts in his name. When we feed the hungry, embrace the stranger, care for the patient and the

prisoner, we minister to Jesus Christ, and we feel his presence. With proof like that, who needs the shroud?

May this holiest of Christian seasons bring each of you a renewed and awesome experience of Christ's presence in your life. May it also bring an increased excitement for all of us as we week to serve the Lord who cannot be constrained in a shroud, a tomb, or our own limited experiences.

Peace, **Phil**

I-CUB GAMES TO BENEFIT DMARC FOOD PANTRY

Attend an Iowa Cubs game at Principal Park in Des Moines for free, courtesy of DMARC. To participate bring three food items to exchange for one general admission ticket to the game that night. The general admission ticket may be upgraded to reserved grandstand for \$2.00.

If interested, DMARC will be collecting food on the following Monday nights: April 24, May 15, July 17, August 7, & 21.

FOOD PANTRY WEEKEND DELAYED TO APRIL 23

This year, Easter falls on the third Sunday of April (4/16). Past experience has shown DMARC that Easter is not a good weekend to collect food/money for the Food Pantry. Therefore, the fourth Sunday (4/23) has been designated as Food Pantry Sunday. Large volunteer groups will be on duty on Monday, April 23, not on April 17.

Congregational Connection

Presbytery congregations have a reason to celebrate:

Rev. Dave Madsen of Cottage Grove Avenue Presbyterian Church in Des Moines prayed at the opening of both the Senate and the House of Representatives at the Iowa State Capitol on Feb. 22. It happened to be the 274th birthday of President George Washington, so Dave offered a prayer that was a personal one of Washington's.

The **Sudanese choirs at Cottage Grove Avenue Presbyterian Church in Des Moines** now have choir robes donated by the **First United Presbyterian Church in**



Atlantic, which had recently purchased new robes. The photo above shows the Mabaan choir in the new robes. ("Mabaan" refers to a particular ethnic group and language.) Having these robes helps the newcomers feel more like they are in tune with the American culture.

Lois Williams, First Presbyterian Church in

Grimes, is the new historian representative for the Synod of Lakes and Prairies' Presbyterian Womens group. She will be collecting historical information from the 16 presbyteries in our Synod.

Rev. Duane Miller, Ankeny Presbyterian Church, is officially engaged to be married to Paula Connolly. No date is set yet.

Prayers and Concerns

Please keep in your prayers the following:

Jack Palmer, husband of **Rev. Sara Speer-Palmer (HR)**, had a fall at his home before Easter and is recuperating at Lucas County Hospital and will be back at the Good Samaritan Nursing Home in Indianola soon.

Rev. John Gallentine, Covenant in West Des Moines, has left to pursue other endeavors. Best wishes to John and his family.

Rev. Bob Cook, El Salvador designated missionary, recently had a

tragic experience Feb. 12, while driving Compañeros photographer, Kent Newman, from Santa Ana in Guatemala to San Salvador in El Salvador. Unfortunately a woman stepped out in front of his car traveling 60 mph, and died instantly. On the road to recovering mentally from this sad accident, Rev. Cook has begun raising funds toward building a home for Reyna Marisol Sandoval Flores' two children and her mother. While the materials will never fill the void of this 22-year-old's life or income, it will help toward making a

comfortable home for the family.

Prayers for all affected by this loss are needed. If you'd like to contribute financially, send checks to the Presbytery of Des Moines office, in the memo line include: "Robert Cook's orphan fund." and monies will be forwarded to El Salvador for help constructing the home.

If you'd like details of this defining moment that has become a project of God, go online to read Bob's letter at: www.oursisterparish.org/journal.htm.

Order 2006-07 Planning Calendars Now!



God has spoken to people through dreams and visions, offering them a different way to live. In the 2006–2007 Presbyterian Planning Calendar, stained-glass windows (and one mosaic) reflect images of some of these dreams and visions, accompanied by

words from Scripture and other writings. The calendar also features:

- Monthly calendar pages from June 2006 through December 2007
- Lectionary for the Lord’s Day and special days
- Colors for the liturgical seasons
- Liturgical days, programmatic emphases, and secular holidays
- Monthly planning suggestions and resources

- Synod, presbytery and GA staff directories
- Fold-out synod, presbytery, and world maps

Individual calendars are \$9.95 each plus shipping. Copies will be available starting in May.

Order your calendars through the Des Moines Presbytery office and save \$4.45 per copy! Use the form to the right or contact Office Manager Betty Dyer at 515-276-4991, pbydesmoines@qwest.net.

2006-2007 PLANNING CALENDAR ORDER FORM

Church _____

Contact _____

Address _____

City _____

Zip _____

Phone _____

2006-2007 Presbyterian Planning Calendar
(Item #7061206500)

No. of copies _____

X \$5.50 = _____

Please return order form by May 1, 2006.

Mail form and check made payable to:

Presbytery of Des Moines
2400 86th St., Suite 20
Urbandale, IA 50322-4306

Employment Opportunities

Interim Pastor –

A full-time interim pastor is needed at the **Convenant Presbyterian Church in West Des Moines**. For more information, contact the Presbytery of Des Moines office at pby1@qwest.net.

Interim Pastor –

A full-time interim pastor is needed at the **Union Park Presbyterian Church**, 1307 Thompson Ave., in Des Moines. For details about the position or to apply, contact Clerk of Session Joyce Rash, at 515-266-4988 or joycerash@hotmail.com.

Administrative Assistant –

This person provides administrative and secretarial services for staff, committees, and volunteers. It’s a part-time position, 20-hours a week, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. If interested, contact the

Heartland Presbyterian Church

14300 Hickman Rd., Clive, IA 50325-7774, at 515-987-4246 or office@heartlandpresbyterian.org.

Christian Youth Coordinator –

Full-time position for middle through High School youth programs. Contact Personnel Committee, **St. Paul**

Presbyterian Church in Johnston

515-276-2818, jw.gilmore@att.net.

Stated Clerk –

The Presbyteries of East Iowa and North Central Iowa are searching for a ½ time Stated Clerk. For a complete list of duties and required skills contact: The Presbytery of East Iowa, Attn: Administrative Unit Stated Clerk Search, 1700 S. First Avenue, Suite 23, Iowa City, IA 52240

Director of Music Ministries –

Westminster Presbyterian Church, Cedar Rapids, needs a person to lead their vibrant and established music program. Applicants for this part-time position must be musically accomplished, creative, enthusiastic, and energetic. If interested, send cover letter and resume to Director of Music Search Committee, 1285 3rd Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52403 or e-mail at: westmin@crwpc.org

Pastoral Care Director–

Mercy Medical Center in Des Moines needs a person to provide administrative direction for services to meet the spiritual needs of the hospital patients, families and employees as well as the community. For a list of qualifications, experience needed or to apply, go online to:

Take Summer Online Courses from Dubuque

This summer the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary is offering online fully-accredited M. Div. courses in Presbyterian Polity, Reformed Worship, History and Confessions of the Presbyterian Church, and Introduction to Old Testament.

The University is in their seventh year of offering online education for lay persons preparing for CLP ministry and in the third year of offering M. Div. courses. The online courses are offered to many students attending non-PC(USA) seminaries who have taken these courses in the past three years. Another group that has found these courses helpful, are non-PC(USA) clergy who wish to serve Presbyterian congregations.

Information about these courses is available online at: <http://udtseminary.net>. If you have questions or would like more information about these or other online M. Div. courses, contact John P. Jewell, D. Min., Director of Distance Education, Assistant Professor of Ministry and Technology, at 563-589-3101 or udtsonline@dbq.edu.

Presbytery Happenings

GENERAL ASSEMBLY UPDATE

When the General Assembly (GA) of the PC(USA) convenes this summer in Birmingham, Alabama, among those in attendance will also be **Ted Coppock**, member of **Westminster Presbyterian Church in Des Moines**. Ted was selected by the Presbytery of Des Moines to serve as an Overture Advocate, and will be working to support the overture that our presbytery voted to send to the General Assembly last summer.

The overture seeks to delete from the Book of Order the language that prohibits ordination of gays and lesbians as elders, deacons, and ministers of the word. Ted has worked tirelessly on this issue and is well-prepared to speak in support of this overture. If you have questions about the overture, Ted's e-mail is htedcoppock@aol.com.

Our presbytery's Social Ministries Task Force is working to raise funds to help defray the cost of Ted's

trip (June 14-23), as funding for Overture Advocates is not a part of the regular presbytery budget. Several congregations have already contributed to this cause, but the goal of \$2,000 has not yet been met. Anyone wishing to make a donation to the Overture Advocate fund is encouraged to call the Presbytery of Des Moines, 515-276-4991.

Other GA delegates and their e-mails include: Clergy commissioner **Rev. Sue Babovec** of **First Presbyterian Church in Ottumwa**, sbabovec@ottumwafirstpresby.org. Elder commissioner **Ray Peters** of **Ankeny Presbyterian Church**, lrpconsulting@msn.com and Youth Advisory Delegate **Cassie Decker**, member of **First Presbyterian Church in Corning**.

SYNOD PW GATHERING IN JULY

Creating the Patchwork of Life a PW Synod Gathering, sponsored by the Synod of Lakes and Prairies

Presbyterian Women's group, will be held July 11-14, at Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, Iowa. Mary Tatem, a Christian author of inspirational quilting books, will be the featured speaker. Cost is approximately \$250 and includes classes, lodging and meals. Each Presbytery is encouraged to bring a quilt or smaller quilted item for display. There is also a possibility for churches to sell items for fund-raising. Contact Gathering Coordinator **Emily Seeger (Atlantic First United)** at 712-243-4519 or seeger@metc.net.

HURRICANE MISSION TRIP A SUCCESS

The Southwest Regional Partnership mission trip in late March to the First Union Presbyterian Church in Luling, La., was a success according to coordinator **Rev. Tim Maxa**. "We had a great trip to Louisiana. The work we did was hard at times. We gutted three homes, a beauty shop and

continued on page 9

TRANSFORMATIONAL MOMENTS

Leon Presbyterian Church – People from several Leon Churches gather together monthly for "Let's Eat Lunch Together." It is a bring your own sack lunch to the Leon church basement the 4th Tuesday of each month from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. No program. No agenda. Just join us for lunch!

First Presbyterian Church, Newton – Bought candles from El Salvador mission and when they arrived, they were broken. What to do? Send them back to El Salvador and get the money back from the mission team. Instead they came up with a creative slogan and sold the candles during the festival anyway. "Broken Candles for Broken Hearts" actually sold out of all the broken candles and had to order more.

Presbytery Happenings continued from page 8



helped remove two bath tubs from another home. But it was very rewarding. Parts of New Orleans still look like war zones, while other parts look unaffected." Rev. Maxa reminds us that the need for volunteers will extend for at least seven years.

For more information on the upcoming Presbytery mission trips to the Gulf Coast region in June, contact **Anna Williams**, espanda@msn.com or **Jeff Gumm**, 515-987-2326, jsgumm@yahoo.com with **Heartland Presbyterian Church in Clive**.

Mission trip participants included: **Rev. Tim Maxa**, (Lenox/Sharpsburg); **Denise Core**, **Blair** and **Marilyn Lawson**, (Indianola); **Gary Badgett** and **Pete Haas**, (Corning); **David Walter**, **Andy Hartley** and **Angela Combs** (Lenox); **Paul Conaway** and **Marion Hargin** (Creston First); and **Harold Spring**,

Kiley Sherwood, **Mary Lou Miller**, **Daniel** and **Melanie Breech** (Sharpsburg).

SYNOD PARTNERING RESOURCES

Does your presbytery need help with financial matters, leadership development, internet technology, ethnic ministry, or developing a communication plan to advance the work of the church? The Synod of Lakes and Prairies staff can help you find ways to address concerns by finding external resources and working as a partner with you to advance your efforts. Explore www.lakesandprairies.org to learn more or call our office at 651-357-1140 or 800-328-1880.

CHOIR ROBES NEEDED Clifton Heights

Presbyterian Church in Des Moines is putting together a choir and looking for about 12 adult choir robes that another church is no longer using. Contact

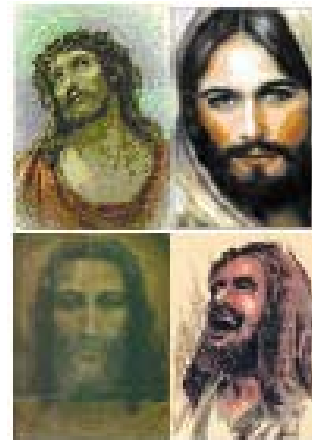
Music Director, Pat Wiggins, at 515-276-6696 or e-mail pedigop@iowa-hospice.com.

HELP US CELEBRATE OUR "JUST NEIGHBORS!"

The Social Ministries Task Force (SMTF) is looking for examples of social justice ministry in Des Moines Presbytery congregations and communities. They want to know what is happening to educate congregations about social justice issues; to empower them as advocates for neighbors in need; and to provide opportunities for greater service. Please contact **Nancy Lister-Settle**, SMTF moderator, at 515-992-3639 or neitherthecat@aol.com before the May 16 meeting of Presbytery!

MRV SUDANESE FELLOWSHIP ORDAINS ELDERS

News came in March of the examination of four elders in the Missouri River Valley Presbytery. Ordained were Elizabeth Wichar, Rebecca Nyapini, Mary Nyakui and John Kulang Pot (the only male among the four elders). This is a first for a Midwest PC(USA) commission to ordain four Sudanese elders. Also, this is of historical significance for the Sudanese, because women are normally ordained for the office of the Deacon only.



Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?

Take a tour through the Gospel of Mark and discover how Mark "paints" the story of our Savior, Saturday, May 13, 2006, 9:30 – 3:30 p.m. at Clifton Heights Presbyterian Church in Des Moines at 2900 Easter Lake Dr.

If Mark were a painter, how would his paintings of Jesus look? Just like every artist brings their technique to the canvas, every writer brings their style to the page.

Come and compare how Mark paints the story of Jesus with other "artists" of his time such as Matthew, Luke or John.

Cost of the seminar is \$10 per person and includes lunch, Registration begins at 9 a.m.

For details call 515-285-5102 or go online to www.cliftonheights.net.

FYI: Advocacy Websites

DES MOINES PRESBYTERY JOINING HANDS AGAINST HUNGER IN EGYPT
www.desmoineswithegypt.org

COMPAÑEROS' OUR SISTER PARISH IN EL SALVADOR
www.oursisterparish.org

PREBYSTERIAN CHURCH (USA)
www.pcusa.org/hunger/
www.pcusa.org/missionconnections

ECUMENICAL ADVOCACY DAYS
www.advocacydays.org/index.php

DEBT, AIDS, TRADE, AFRICA
www.data.org

THE ONE CAMPAIGN
www.one.org

HUNGER SITES
www.bread.org
www.thehungersite.com

CHURCH WORLD SERVICE
www.churchworldservice.org

SOJOURNERS: CHRISTIANS FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE
www.sojo.net

RESULTS, INC.
www.results.org

AGRICULTURAL MISSIONS, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
www.agriculturalmissions.org/

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT
www.millenniumcampaign.org

AIDS INFO
www.theglobalfight.org
www.theglobalfund.org

TRADE INFO
www.oxfam.org
www.maketradeair.com

DEBT INFO
www.worldbank.org
www.netaid.org
www.jubileepius.org

C.R.O.S.S. Ministries Update

A couple of weeks ago I was at a store when I noticed a familiar face. It isn't unusual for me to run into former CROSS clients, GVC students, or even former inmates from Mitchellville that I have counseled, but the challenge lies in remembering the setting before greeting the individual. Sometimes neither of us immediately recalls how our paths have crossed. That can be a little tricky, for obvious reasons, so I have learned how to hedge my words a bit until things come clear. It was that precise situation that I encountered that day. The

difference was the woman remembered me. With a smile that could light up the city of Des Moines, she threw her arms around me and announced, "I'm a Hurricane Katrina evacuee! Remember me?"

I had last seen her in December when she had come in to ask for help with her rent. She was struggling both emotionally and financially, and trying to begin her life all over again since she had just lost her townhouse, job, and all of her worldly possessions. She was trying to do all of the right things. She located an

apartment, enrolled in a training program at DMACC, and was talking with a counselor about the panic attacks that had begun shortly after Hurricane Katrina devastated Louisiana.

This day she was bubbling over as she told me she had completed school and was starting her own business. She thanked me for the help that CROSS Ministries had given her during that difficult time.

I extend that thank you to all who have provided the time and money to enable this vital ministry to individuals in crisis.

– Roberta Victor,
 CROSS Ministries Director

Hope and Help in El Salvador

More than 13 years ago, the churches of the Des Moines Presbytery began a walk of justice and solidarity with the people in the poor communities of Berlin, El Salvador. After a vicious war, more than anything, the people needed hope for the road ahead. As a Presbytery, we committed to making that walk with them, Our Sister Parish, hand in hand.

During this walk, many of us as individuals or small delegations have experienced great joy in working, laughing, grieving, living, and hoping with our Christian family there. The road has taken many

turns, a few detours and suffered the occasional landslide. Yet, still we walk.

2006 will bring more turns and a whole new stretch of road. In August, Rev. Bob Cook, our designated missionary to Berlin, will retire. What began with his vision and passion will continue through this period of transition and adjustment. Throughout the rest of this year, Compañeros asks for your congregations' Mission Committee and Session support in the following ways:

- Please pray for Our Sister Parish in this time of transition.

- Also, pray for Compañeros as we seek the person who will be called to continue the work of Our Sister Parish.

- Consider supporting the General Mission monetarily as we will incur additional expenses this year in interviewing candidates and placing the person called to this mission.

If you have questions, comments or would like more information, contact companeros@oursisterparish.org or call the Presbytery Office at 515-276-4991.

– Sue Hotovec,
 Compañeros Moderator

IRMS Celebrates 20th Anniversary

Join the parade! On Sunday, April 30, at 2:30 p.m., Iowa Religious Media Services (IRMS) will celebrate 20 years of service with its seven covenanting denominations and their member churches, non-profit organizations and the community-at-large.

Reenacting the inaugural ceremony that took place 20 years ago, attendees will gather, as they did in 1986, at Glen Echo Christian Church, 4323 Douglas Avenue in Des Moines. After a short program honoring past staff, board and volunteers, the group will form a gala parade complete with musicians, robed clergy, banners and balloons.

The procession will travel to the IRMS facility at 3816 36th Street. Attendees will then participate in a brief Re-Covenanting Ceremony and enjoy fellowship.

The April celebration is one of two events marking the 20th

Anniversary. The second celebration, *RE: Image – Rediscovering the Language of God*, on Saturday, Aug. 27, will be a daylong education event focusing on cutting-edge Christian education ideas. Nationally known preacher and theologian Tex Sample will keynote the event, assisted in worship by Len Wilson of Midnight Oil (formerly Lumicon). Among the eight afternoon seminars will be one on spirituality presented by **Mary Beth Mardis-LeCroy (Westminster, Des Moines)** and Matt Mardis-LeCroy.

IRMS was born of an idea to create one central ecumenical resource center for Christian education books and audiovisual materials for the seven covenanting denominations: Synod of Lakes and Prairies, PC(USA); Episcopal Diocese of Iowa;

Iowa Conference of the United Church of Christ; Iowa United Methodist Conference; Des Moines Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church; Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Upper Midwest; and the Mid-American Baptist Churches. They combined the educational resources from their denominational libraries into one central facility to make precious financial resources go farther by sharing. That concept of stewardship continues to work today.

The IRMS library of more than 7,500 resources is available to IRMS member churches and their members at no charge. Non-members may use IRMS resources for a nominal weekly rental fee. To learn more about IRMS and the 20th Anniversary activities or to search the complete catalog for other resources of interest, go to www.irms.org and search by "Subject."



Web Opportunity for PC(USA) Congregations

Give your ministry an advantage with a PC(USA) WebMedley™.

These basic Web sites are made available to congregations that do not currently have a Web site, or for those that have a limited Web

presence but would prefer an easy, inexpensive way to be online with interesting content from trusted sources. Go online to see all the features of a single page site from WebMedley and the PC(USA) at

<http://pcusa.webmedley2.com/>.

Packages include, PC(USA) content feeds, domain name, e-mail

account, and live phone training for your site's administrator. Priced for even the smallest budgets, an annual subscription is \$60.00 (plus

\$35.00 one-time admin fee). To sign up, call WebMedley sales at 800-434-8607 or e-mail

sales@webmedley.com.

Celebrate Gifts of Women with LeRoy PC

The **South Central Regional Partnership of the Des Moines Presbytery** offers an invitation for all to attend the "Celebrate the Gifts of Women" Thursday, April 27 at the Humeston Christian-United Methodist Church. The church is located at the south edge of Humeston on Highway 65 and is part of Trinity Parish with the **LeRoy Presbyterian Church**.

The social hour begins at 6 p.m., with dinner at 6:30 followed by the celebrations observing the 100th anniversary of the Ordination of women as deacons (1906-2006), the 50th anniversary of the Ordination of women to the Office of Word and Sacrament (1956-2006), and the 75th anniversary of the Ordination of women as elders (1930-2005). Honored guests from each

congregation will be the women who have the longest service in these positions. Women clergy of the Presbytery will also be recognized.

Cost is \$12. To attend, mail checks payable to **LeRoy Presbyterian Church**, P.O. Box 218, Humeston, Iowa 50123. For details call Lynn or Amanda at 641-877-4641.

**Presbytery of Des Moines
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH (U.S.A.)**

2400 86th St., Suite 20
Urbandale, IA 50322-4306

Phone: 515-276-4991

Fax: 515-276-7596

pbycommunication@qwest.net

Editor: Kim Coulter

General Presbyter:

Rev. Philip W. Barrett

Office Manager: Betty Dyer

Coordinator of Sudanese

Ministries: Rev. Goanar J. Chol

Hunger Action Enabler:

Nancy Lister-Settle

Designated Missionary

to El Salvador: Rev. Bob Cook

Designated Missionary

to Egypt: Denise England

The Wider Circle *is published monthly by the Presbytery of Des Moines, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). To learn more, contact the office or go online to www.presbyteryofdesmoines.org.*

Copy deadline is the last day of the month. Please submit articles in Microsoft Word or compatible format; digital images and photos are both acceptable.

**PREBYTERY OF DES MOINES
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)**
2400 86TH STREET, SUITE 20
URBANDALE, IA 50322-4306

PC(USA) Update continued from page 4

LONG-TERM VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Presbyterian Disaster

Assistance (PDA) continues to build the response team for the Gulf Coast Recovery.

There are now six Volunteer Villages operating in Mississippi and Louisiana.

By the end of this month, 6,100 volunteers will have stayed in PDA Volunteer Villages; these volunteers will have donated 291,400 hours towards the hurricane relief and recovery effort.

The PDA Volunteer Villages are filling a major need in the recovery effort and is a successful model of

involving short-term volunteers in the relief and recovery effort. However, we need long-term volunteers to continue this success.

There are three key positions to fill; they are looking for Presbyterians with a passion to serve, an appreciation for our connectedness and the role of the Presbyteries in the recovery, and people who can be flexible and gracious under pressure. A living stipend and housing is available.

A description of these positions can be found at www.pcusa.org/nvo/disaster

[opportunities.htm](#). Apply through the *One Door* program on the Web.

DISTRIBUTION FOR PDA HURRICANE FUNDS

Numerous inquiries have been received regarding the distribution of funds received by PDA for the 2005 Hurricane response. The PDA Advisory Committee met in April and approved a long-term strategic allocation for these funds. Information on the plan, including FAQs and the principles upon which it was based can now be viewed on the Web site:

www.pcusa.org/Katrina.

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.presbyteryofdesmoines.org