

The Wider Circle

Presbytery of Des Moines 515-276-4991 / July 2006 Vol. 2, Issue 7



**PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH (USA)**

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

Of Special Interest

- Pastoral Letter from GA
- Mission Yearbooks Order Form
- Prayers and Concerns

Moderator, stated clerk issue pastoral letter on General Assembly

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, PC(USA)
June 25, 2006

To Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Lectionary Psalm for today is Psalm 133: "How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!"

As the 217th General Assembly met together in

Birmingham, it was remarkable to see Presbyterians from north, south, east, and west gathered together to discern the mind of Christ for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). We witnessed the work of the Spirit in and through the assembly, giving us a glimpse of our visible oneness in Jesus Christ. We give thanks that the assembly theme, "So Great a Cloud of Witnesses" (Heb. 12:1) permeated the community

of faith within the convention center.

In this meeting, we saw commissioners and advisory delegates living out in word and deed their deep commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ, their passion to be living expressions of Christ's love to the world, and their eagerness to be a part of the future God intends for the PC(USA). We experienced the Presbyterian process of

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Phil's Corner



July 4 – Independence Day – has just been celebrated.

It's a day we celebrate our country's breaking away from British rule, thus making us an independent country, at least as far as government is concerned. We fancy ourselves as able to carry on by ourselves, not needing anyone else's help. As far as national

government goes, this is basically true. However, our idea that we are independent as a people strikes me as at least misunderstood. True, we stand alone as a nation, but where would this nation be without oil from the Middle East, chrome from Africa, sugar, bananas, coffee and other foods coming in from other countries, and so on?

On a more local basis, where would we be without some people planting and

harvesting, or someone to maintain our cars, our streets, our homes? When we click on a light or turn on a water faucet, we depend on utilities to provide power and water. We have come to rely on others more than our independent nature likes to admit.

We are no different in the Presbyterian/Reformed tradition. We come together in a faith-practice based on dependence on one another.

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Communication Help for Church Leaders

*The Synod of Lakes and Prairies, along with PC(USA) are sponsoring a **Presbyterian Communicators Network** regional conference to be held Aug. 2-4. Cost for this 3-day event is \$275 and includes lodging at the Millennium Hotel in downtown Minneapolis with conference activities at Westminster Presbyterian Church.*

For more information about the conference or to register go to: www.pcusa.org/comnet/.

If you are interested in carpooling, contact Kim Coulter, Director of Communications at the Presbytery Office, 515-276-4991 or pbycommunication@qwest.net.

Events Calendar

2006

July 7-11 – *Creation! Celebration!, God's Word—Light for the Journey*, 2006 Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women in Louisville, Ky. For details, go online to: www.pcusa.org/pwgathering/index.htm.

July 12-19 – 50th Annual Omaha Presbyterian School for Pastors, in Hastings College, Hastings, Neb., Details and applications are available through the Presbytery office.

July 14 & 15 – *Ministry During Times of Loss*, offered by The Lay Academy of the North Central Iowa Presbytery, to be held at Fort Dodge First Presbyterian Church. It is open to all lay and clergy to explore how individuals, families and communities experience various forms of loss. Leaders are Rev. Mark Pell and Rev. Phil Somsen. The \$65.00 fee is for the class, meals and a single room at a local motel. Contact Marcia Rich to register 515-576-2091 or e-mail at: marciar.firstpresfd@frontiernet.net.

July 21-23 – St. Paul Presbyterian Church in Johnston will host a *LOGOS Training School*. If you have attended a training previously and want a refresher and new ideas, you are encouraged to join

in the fun. Opportunities are ample to meet people from other churches, better understand the LOGOS program and its goals, and learn new ideas. We guarantee you will leave feeling excited to kick off your program this coming fall. For details, contact **Debbie Wych** or **Sandy Orth** at 515-276-2818, or stpaulpres@juno.com.

July 31-Aug. 7 – El Salvador mission trip, Delegation from Heartland Presbyterian Church in Clive

Aug. 11-13 – *For Such a Time as This*, Church Women United Central Region Event to be held at Saint John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota. Cost is \$170 and registrations

Synod School 2006



Synod School, an annual midsummer ministry of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), is . . .

learning
worship
music
fellowship
relaxation
spiritual growth
affordable
fun for all ages

July 23-28, 2006

Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, Iowa

Discover Synod School!

Go to www.lakesandprairies.org/events.html
or phone 1-800-328-1880, ext. 207.

**The Color of Grace
in a Black and White World**

Events Calendar continued from page 2

must be received by May 9 or late fees apply. For details and form contact: Judy Regan, 605-332-7489 or cwucre@sio.midco.net.

Aug. 19 – Presbytery Meeting, Cottage Grove Avenue Presbyterian Church in Des Moines.

Aug. 26 – *Image: Rediscovering the Language of God*, conference sponsored by the Iowa Religious Media Services (IRMS) to be held

9a.m.-4 p.m., at Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, 4126 Ingersoll Avenue, Des Moines. This daylong education event focusing on cutting-edge Christian education ideas has nationally known preacher and theologian Tex Sample as keynote, assisted in worship by Len Wilson of Midnight Oil (formerly Lumicon). Speakers include **Rev. Mary Beth Mardis-LeCroy** who is Associate

Pastor for Spiritual Development at **Westminster Presbyterian Church in Des Moines**. Cost for IRMS member church is \$45, Nonmembers - \$50, and at the door - \$55. IRMS has reserved a block of rooms at the Holiday Inn Express at Drake University, 1140 24th Street, Des Moines. The special rate is only \$69 per night; mention the RE:Image Conference. For details go online to: www.irms.org/RE-Image.asp.



Jazz in July in Clive

Heartland Presbyterian Church in Clive is sponsoring it's 4th Jazz In July event, July 12 starting at 6 p.m. The opening band will be Heartland's own

By-Heart and the headliner

will be the Sam Salamone Group.

The concert will be held outdoors unless there is bad weather, so please bring your lawn chairs. The Sanctuary will be the rain location. Free refreshments will be provided

during the event. Heartland Presbyterian Church is located at 142nd St. and Hickman Rd. in Clive.

Please invite your friends and neighbors and feel free to announce this event during your worship services.

It's guaranteed! You won't be voted off the island and there will be lots of cool things to do!

Sip icy cold drinks; play bocce ball; take a dip in the pool; participate in water volleyball; enjoy "sudden death" golf; backyard dominoes or horseshoes; for the "young-at-heart", there will be a croquet match. Plus delicious barbeque sandwiches and the fixins' will be provided.

The **First Presbyterian Church of Des Moines** is planning a patio picnic on Sunday, July 16. It will be held at **Barbara and Maynard Boatwright's** home, 2331 East 39th Court. The picnic will begin right after Sunday morning worship services. Call First Presbyterian Church for reservations at 515-262-5679.

New Theological Courses in Des Moines

In support of the calling of lay and clergy church leaders, Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis has partnered with churches in central Iowa to offer a Theological program to challenge the mind and the spirit.

Six master's-level courses will be offered to those seeking to be licensed or ordained ministers and for lay persons who want high-quality, ecumenical, theological

education. Courses are also suitable for licensed ministers and ordained ministers who want to refresh their skills and knowledge. Students can apply these courses toward a master's degree program with the approval.

Each course carries three semester credit hours and incurs Christian Theological Seminary's regular tuition charges of \$400 per hour (\$1,200 per course).

Students who have not previously enrolled in a course at Christian Theological Seminary must complete the non-degree student application or the certificate program application. You may download these from the Web site: www.cts.edu, or contact the registrar toll-free at 800-585-0108 or by e-mail: registrar@cts.edu.

For a brochure and registration form, contact the Presbytery Office.



PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Your Help is Needed Now

The City of New Orleans has now decreed that all Katrina affected homes must be in the process of being gutted or rehabilitated by Aug. 29, 2006. If not, they will be demolished. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is therefore making a special appeal for work teams to come in July and August to the Volunteer Villages in the New Orleans area. Please remember that even a group of 5 would constitute a team. Besides your congregation, you might consider putting a team together from your Rotary, Elks, or Garden clubs or other civic organizations. The toll-free registration number for work teams is 866-732-6121.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Update

INDONESIA EARTHQUAKE UPDATE

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) has released \$113,500 from One Great Hour of Sharing and designated funds to support the relief efforts for survivors of the earthquake that struck south of the city of Yogyakarta on Indonesia's island of Java May 27.

This 6.3-magnitude quake has so far killed 5,427 people, seriously wounded 6,504, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed 19,535 homes and severely damaged another 13,624, according to the country's Social Affairs Ministry.

A \$2.5 million ACT appeal focusing on relief and immediate rehabilitation needs has been issued, but is limited to a response period of 3-6 months. Details on the initial response is on the PDA Web site: www.pcusa.org/pda/response/asia/indonesia-earthquake053006.htm

Indonesia is still recovering from the devastation of the December 2004 tsunami and PDA continues to support the long-term recovery efforts. Information on this progress and the work of our partners can also be found on the PDA Web site: www.pcusa.org/pda.

Contributions for may be sent through normal mission-giving channels by designating gifts for the following account: Indonesia Response #DR000146. Gifts by credit card can be made by calling PresbyTel at 800-872-3283, or online at the PDA Web site: www.pcusa.org/pda/response/asia/indonesia-index.

Checks payable to the PC(USA) can be mailed to: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Central Receiving, 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY, 40202.

MEMBERSHIP LOSS IS LARGEST SINCE 1975
Membership in the PC(USA) declined by more than 2% in 2005, but total giving to the church increased by more than 5%, topping \$3 billion for the first time.

According to figures released June 2 by the Office of the General Assembly, PC(USA) "communicant" membership at the end of last year totaled 2,313,662 – a decline of 48,474 or 2.05% from 2004. Including 318,291 baptized but not confirmed members and 466,889 inactive members, total PC(USA) membership stands at 3.1 million.

More on this story can be found online at:

<http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2006/06300.htm>

SOUPER BOWL NETS \$4.8 MILLION FOR NEEDY

Souper Bowl of Caring officials say Presbyterian churches collected a record \$921,616 in this year's annual anti-hunger campaign. Overall, more than 11,644 organizations and congregations from a variety of U.S. religious denominations have reported collecting \$4,844,466.

Donations from Presbyterians made up 19% of the total, the second most contributions behind the Roman Catholic Church. The PC(USA) had the second-highest number of churches participating, behind the United Methodist Church.

Groups that participate are asked only to report their totals, so that a national figure can be calculated. Organizers encourage churches that have not yet reported 2006 Souper Bowl totals or wish to register for the 2007 campaign, to log on www.souperbowl.org or call 800-358-SOUP (7687).

To read more on this article go online to: www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2006/06314.htm.

Phil's Corner continued from page 1

Churches depend on pastors to provide worship and spiritual leadership, and pastors depend on members to share in leadership and to participate in the various activities of a congregation. Members depend on each other to celebrate and support in their life of faith.

In our Presbytery, we again depend on each other for leadership and support and, as in our congregations, we depend on each person and congregation to participate and share in what we're up to. We really can't do

things on our own. Where would we be when searching for a pastor (even if it takes a while)? When we need help with programs or problems? When we need a grant or loan to get us over a hump or begin a new project?

Of course, we'd be nowhere – in our country or our churches – without the awesome love, care, guidance and protection of God in Christ. The only reason we're here and that there is a world in which to live, is because God created us. We didn't do anything to

get here or deserve the blessings we have. For each breath, each step, each person, each bit of food, we depend on God.

So let's face it, folks. We're not independent. We are created as communal creatures. We need each other. We depend on each other. On top of this, Christ depends on us to share the good news of His life and love with other folks.

Independent? Not a chance. Dependent – and blessed to be so? Absolutely!

Peace, Phil

Prayers and Concerns

Please keep in your prayers the following:

Carolyn Beran, spouse of **Rev. John Beran**, interim pastor of United Presbytery Church in Diagonal, died Thursday, July 6, after a month-long battle with acute leukemia. Carolyn and her husband, John were Missionaries in the Philippines for 30 years and were a part of the Mission Ag Project with PC(USA). Since John's honorable retirement with the Presbytery of Des Moines, Carolyn has been serving as Christian Education coordinator and pianist at the United Presbyterian Church in Lenox.

Visitation will be from 6-8 p.m., Sunday, July 9, at the Coen-Beaty-Pearson Funeral Home, 301 N. Main St., Lenox, Iowa. Funeral services will be held 10:30 a.m., Monday, July 10 at the United Presbyterian Church, 401 W. Michigan St., in Lenox, Iowa. Condolences may be sent to Rev. John Beran, 800 E. Ohio Street, Lenox, Iowa 50851.

Former presbytery member, **Rev. Terry Hennesy's** mother Anna, died Thursday, July 6. Visitation is Sat. July 8, 10 a.m.-Noon, with lunch and the funeral at 1:30 p.m. at the Highland Park

Presbyterian Church, 321 Euclid Ave. in Des Moines. Condolences for Terry's father Dean and the Hennesy family can be sent to Terry at 3203 Polaris Dr., Ames, Iowa 50010.

Margery and Rev. Marvin Potter are mourning the death of Margery's mother late last month. She was over 100 years old. Services were held the end of June in Illinois. Condolences can be sent to the Potters at 912 S. 14th Ave., W., Newton, Iowa, 50208-5230.



International presentation opportunity comes to your church!

The Presbytery of Des Moines Social Ministries Task Force (SMTF) would like to offer to our congregations the opportunity to participate in the International Peacemakers Program. The task force will pay the \$400 fee to bring a peacemaker to your community if your church can do the hosting and scheduling. If you'd like more information, contact SMTF Moderator Nancy Lister-Settle, at 515-992-3639 or neitherthecat@aol.com.

Even though the deadline has passed, a number of available slots still remain between Sept. 29 and Oct. 23. For information as to which guests and which time slots are still available, contact Bryan Reiff at 888-728-7228, ext. 5786 or e-mail breiff@ctr.pcusa.org.

Learn more about the International Peacemakers program at: www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/intl/international.htm.



Racial Ethnic Scholarships are Available

The Racial Ethnic Scholarship Fund is an educational assistance program designed to encourage Racial Ethnic students in their preparation for service in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Funds are provided by the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, Committee on Racial Ethnic Ministry.

If you are interested in this scholarship program, contact the Synod office at 800-328-1880, ext. 204 or 209.

The scholarship application form is available on the Synod of Lakes and Prairies Web site at: www.lakesandprairies.org under links and resources. Or contact the Presbytery office for more information at 515-276-4991.

Deadline to submit applications is Sept. 29, 2006.

Congregational Connection

Presbytery congregations have a reason to celebrate:

Roberta Victor, a member of Cottage Grove Avenue Presbyterian Church in Des Moines and Director of C.R.O.S.S. Ministries discusses with former Gov. Robert Ray the art therapy she has conducted with the Lost Boys of Sudan at the

World Refugee Day, June 19, at the Downtown Farmers' Market.

Rev. David Madsen gave the keynote address to the annual conference of the Otuho Speaking People (Lotuko) of North America. At right, he is pictured with warriors preparing for cultural night.



An unidentified Presbyterian pastor dances with a Liberian troupe during World Refugee Day below. Who says Presbyterians are God's frozen people? The pastor was co-chair of the event.



Employment Opportunities

Presbytery congregations have a reason to celebrate:

Temporary Stated Supply – Cedar Heights Community

Presbyterian Church in Cedar Falls, Iowa, is seeking a part-time (19 hours per week) individual to be a resource for youth CE staff, teacher of adult CE and administrative support for Care Team as well as share in pastoral crisis response and preaching once a month. This position reports directly to the Pastor/Head of Staff. Send Resumes to: Ed Rathmell, 3844 Beaver

Ridge Circle, Cedar Falls, IA 60613. Questions, contact: Rev. Shelly White Wood, 319-268-0153.

Communications Director – The Synod of Lakes and Prairies in Eagan, Minnesota needs a full-time communications professional to work with staff, Presbyteries and stakeholders. Responsibilities are to create and improve communications within the church and public audiences. Send resumes to Cathie Perrault, Synod of Lakes and Prairies, 2115

Cliff Drive, Eagan, MN 55122-3327; cperrault@lakesandprairies.org.

Youth Director – First Presbyterian and First Christian churches in Perry, Iowa, are looking for a full-time Christian youth director and/or an ordained minister in either of the denominations supported by this joint parish. If interested, send resume and cover letter to: Attn. **Don Van Houweling**, P.O. Box 575, Perry, IA 50220, 515-240-7964, donvh@vanwall.com.

PC(USA) Update continued from page 1

doing things at its best. We observed people working fairly and treating each other graciously.

This assembly dealt with hundreds of items, and a few made headlines across the country. Most likely, you have read or will read about the assembly's actions from a number of sources over the next many days and weeks, but we want you to hear about this important gathering directly from the General Assembly. That is why we are writing this letter to you.

We know of three particular decisions that made immediate headlines. Here is what the assembly did with each of them:

- **Israel/Palestine issues:** This General Assembly acknowledged that the actions of the 2004 assembly caused hurt and misunderstanding among some Presbyterians and our Jewish neighbors. However, this assembly did not rescind the previous action on divestment. Divestment is still an option, but not the goal. Instead, this assembly broadened the focus to corporate engagement to ensure that the church's financial investments do not support violence of any kind in the region.

- **Report of the Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church:**

With the approval of this report, the assembly did not alter our historic standards for ordination. However, it did make clear that more responsibility is to be exercised by sessions and presbyteries regarding the examination of candidates for ordination. By an overwhelming majority, the assembly also affirmed our covenantal partnership, our common theological roots, and the need for prayer in Christian communities as we make decisions.

- **The Trinity:** The assembly received a paper that affirms "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" as the church's primary language for the Trinity. The paper also lifts up other biblical images of the Trinity for study and use in worship.

We hope, over the months ahead, you will hear about the other items that did not make headlines – new church development, Christian education, evangelism, older adult ministries, homelessness, globalization, international mission, multicultural issues, disability awareness, and military chaplains, to name a few.

It was obvious to us that this assembly, like the church, had deep differences on a number of issues. But, the longer we were together, the more we realized how much we have in common in Jesus Christ – and the more we realized we need one another.

The unity we seek for the church – and the unity we experienced at the assembly – is not just about coming to an agreement. It is also about being with each other in the healthy struggle to discern God's will. It was that healthy struggle we witnessed at the assembly, and in that struggle we were blessed. God's Spirit was with us. Not everyone will like what the commissioners did, but the spirit coming out of the assembly was something we think will be a blessing to the whole church.

Indeed, we are convinced that God has a future for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). We invite you to join us as we move with renewed enthusiasm to doing God's work in the world.

Yours in Christ,

The Reverend Joan S. Gray,
Moderator of the 217th
General Assembly (2006)

The Reverend Clifton Kirkpatrick, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly



Hear *The Continentals* in Concert

The First Presbyterian Church in Ottumwa would like to invite you all to a special concert on Monday, Aug. 7 at 7 p.m. The Continentals, a interdenominational Christian organization will perform musical favorites for all ages. Continental ministries tour North America and overseas into the heart of a desperate world as short-term missionaries presenting the musical message of God's love to all people. Each group travels to a different region of North America.

If you'd like more information, contact the church at 641-684-5465 or e-mail Rev. Sue

Babovec at sbabovec@ottumwafirstpresby.org.

DVDs Available for Loan

Two DVDs are now available through the Presbytery Office for your use. Ever Expanding Circles is a Stewardship Curriculum for youth ages 10-14, produced by PC(USA). Decoding the Ca Vinci Code is a one-hour program presented by Dr. Ken Bailey. Dr. Bailey taught for 40 years in seminaries and institutes in Egypt, Lebanon, Jerusalem and Cyprus. General Presbyter and Stated Clerk Rev. Phil Barrett, was able to hear an abridged version of this lecture at General Assembly and says it is conducive in studies of this book/movie.

Presbytery Happenings

PLEASE DON'T FORGET ABOUT US

We've all seen pictures of the damage Hurricane Katrina caused in New Orleans. But the eye of the hurricane actually hit land in Mississippi, causing devastation all along the coast and into Alabama. Smaller towns in this area are struggling to rebuild. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) has set up long-term volunteer villages in some of these extremely hard hit areas. **Heartland Presbyterian Church in Clive** recently sent two teams totaling 17 people from various churches in Iowa (Heartland, Des Moines Westminster, Dallas Center, Ottumwa, Ankeny), Kansas City and South Carolina to PDA camps in two of these smaller towns:

Pearlington and D'Iberville, Mississippi. The teams painted, did rough carpentry, drywall mudding, yard work, and most importantly, listened.

They listened to the story of Wally and Joyce who bought their retirement home only 18 months ago and saw it reduced to a pile of lumber. Listened to Rhonda, who lived in Pearlington all her life, helped save 27 people during the storm, but has had to move away because the cries for help of the people she couldn't save still haunt her. Listened to Rhiannon, living in a small FEMA trailer with four children, ages 4 to 14. Listened to Jackie and Johnnie who had lost their homes and some family members but who vowed to

to his house to work every day. And listened to Mary and Wilf, Canadians who have volunteered five times since the storm and finally retired (at age 49) to become long-term volunteers because "we can't leave these wonderful people".

Please consider organizing a group from your church, civic organization, workplace, family and friends to help with the long-term work in this region. It is an experience you will never forget and never regret. See www.pcusa.org/katrina or call 866-732-6121 for more information.

The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. – Matthew 9:37b-38 (NIV).

The **First Presbyterian Church in Centerville** is sending a mission team Sept. 10-16. If interested, contact **Marilyn Vanderlinden** at vander926@mchsi.com.

The **First Presbyterian Church in Creston** is sending work team(s) scheduled for Oct. 14-21, and/or Oct. 21-28. If interested, contact **Marion Hargin**, 641-782-7265, crestonfpc@iowtelecom.net.



Presbytery work team returns from June 11-16 trip to Pearlington, Miss. Pictured in the front row (left to right): Stacey Lazear (Clive, Heartland), and Mary Wityshyn (Pearlington PDA Camp Manager). Back row (left to right): Jane Zieser, JoBeth Schoneberg (DM, Westminster), Melissa Schnucker (Clive, Heartland), Sara Schoneberg (DM, Westminster), Jeff Gumm & Sharon Gumm (Clive, Heartland), Wilf Wityshyn (PDA Logistics Manager), Chris Schnucker (Clive, Heartland), Cody Callas (Ottumwa, First), and Jack Behmer (Clive, Heartland).

help feed the volunteers every day and "feel blessed to have met so many wonderful people." Listened to 74-year-old Don, who moved to the area two years ago to be closer to family, lost everything including cherished family photos, yet is so thankful that volunteers come

Transformation is the name of the game!

Last month we had opportunity to read more details about the upcoming Transformation Conference in Des Moines, Oct. 6-8. Don't forget to mark your calendar and plan to attend and bring several other "thinking outside the box" people from your congregation. It's going to be an awesome weekend!

Some members of the Planning Team recently had a chance to tour the newly (and still being) renovated Downtown Marriott Hotel. This 33-story hotel is quite pleasant and will serve as a restful, convenient, and functional conference site.

Here are a few reasons why everyone – even those with an address of Des Moines – will want to stay "on-site."

First, the Marriott is located at 700 Grand Avenue and is connected (via skywalk) to many points of interest in downtown, including parking garages. This conference has been given a fantastic rate on rooms. You need to make your own reservations with the hotel, but for \$79 per room per night (with up to four people in a room for that \$79 total nightly) it's the most economical use of dollars to be found! Parking (for a fee) is available at the hotel or at various parking ramps near the hotel. Each



room has a coffee maker, hair dryer, ironing board and iron. There are places for relaxation "on the premises" for those who wish to connect with friends (old and new) after hours on Friday or Saturday night. If you plan to eat near the hotel on Friday night – plan at least two hours for seating. It's a busy and hopping place! Second, the Farmers' Market on Saturday morning would be a great place for browsing and for purchasing your breakfast.

Second, each person's registration fee includes: a snack on Friday night; a snack during the morning on Saturday; the Saturday noon "express deli buffet"; another snack in the afternoon; a sit-down dinner (with entertainment) on Saturday night; a Sunday breakfast buffet; and a box

lunch to take as you leave the conference. The meals are generous and sound delicious. If you observe a vegetarian diet, you need to let the conference registrar know this by Sept. 1.

Finally, why would you stay "on site" even with a Des Moines address? For these five fantastic reasons:

1. The schedule is full and fast paced and there's little "commute time".
2. Being "on site" you have additional time to talk, vision, dream and share with others you've come to the conference with. There's no doorbells, children or casual phone calls to interrupt.
3. Being "on site" affords you the time to talk, listen and share with others from not only Des Moines Presbytery, but from all over the Midwest – celebrate a success story from your congregation (it's not bragging in a negative sense if you share with another a new idea that they might find helpful or that gets them to thinking in a new and

different way) or come to hear of another congregation's transformational journey, which might spark new thoughts for you.

4. The resource leaders are very approachable people and will be around and able to "mingle" after hours.
5. It's a legitimate way to "pamper yourself" a little while serving your church!

There's plenty more information on the Web site: www.trinityupc.org/transformation.htm.

Or contact any of the Planning Team members with your questions:

Rev. Phil Barrett, Des Moines Presbytery Office, pby1@qwest.net

Rev. Sue Babovec, First Presbyterian Church in Ottumwa, susanbab@lisco.com

Rev. Dave Endriss, Trinity United Presbyterian Church in Indianola, revendriss@dwx.com

Rev. Jim Howland, First Presbyterian Church in Winterset, pastor@i-rule.net

Do you have a Transformational Moment you'd like to share?

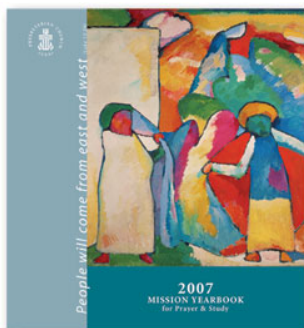
We need your help! Submit your congregation's transformational moments to *The Wider Circle* Editor Kim Coulter, at 515-276-4991 or pbycommunication@qwest.net.

How to use the *Mission*

Yearbook daily?

- Use the *Mission Yearbook* as a way to begin meetings with prayer.
- Learn and share how the PC(USA) is involved in mission. Use the *Mission Yearbook* daily to help support through prayer and practice staff members in synods and presbyteries, and mission co-workers and mission partners at home and around the world.
- Give each member a copy when he or she makes a pledge. The *Mission Yearbook* shows each day where church mission giving goes. The *Children's Mission Yearbook* is filled with information about the church's mission.
- Find out about the many mission projects supported by Presbyterian Women and their creative ministries.
- Give new members a copy when they join the church to introduce them to the mission work of the PC(USA) at home and around the world. Place a copy in the hymnal racks on the pews in your sanctuary.
- Create a class to study PC(USA) local mission and overseas mission and use the *Yearbook* as a textbook.

Order Mission Yearbooks Now and Save!

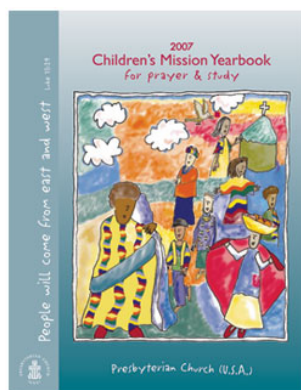


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Solo Delegate Visits El Salvador Team

**By Kathy Mahler,
Don Justo Coffee
Project Coordinator**

June 15-24, 2006

Within my church;

Heartland Presbyterian in Clive, I have been blessed to be a small part of the relationship and journey with the Pastoral Team in Berlin, El Salvador and our partner relationship with the Canton El Tablón and now El Tablón Cerna. Within Compañeros, the blessings grew as I learned of the journey of other groups here in central Iowa and beyond. Now, as Project Coordinator for Don Justo, Coffee with Dignity, I am overwhelmed with blessings.

These blessings have spread within my family. My son, Paul, was one of the first student interns last summer to El Salvador. He spent his days teaching at one of the marginalized schools in Berlin in the morning, and tutoring English to several high school students and even a couple of teachers in the afternoons.

I took my first 'solo' trip then, using Paul as my excuse. When Paul chose to volunteer again this summer I knew I had to go again.

Being in the Pastoral House without a delegation of 12 other people is a different experience. Unlike a group,

I have no itinerary and the Pastoral Team does, for the most part, what they do when there are no visitors. I try to blend in, and have become pretty good at washing dishes hoping to contribute in a small way. I 'helped' Cecelia in the kitchen one day peeling one potato to her eight!

When I am alone, I spend my days finding excuses to go to the market. Walking in Berlin is fabulous – a few people recognize me and will stop and talk – strangers are so kind, and there are plenty of warm smiles and greetings from passers-by.

I always spend a day with Paul at his school – and what a joy to see the mutual love between Paul and his students as well as the camaraderie of his fellow teachers.

Since I was there quite a bit without a translator (Rev. Bob Cook or my son), I picked up more Spanish than normal in sporadic meetings with members of the Pastoral Team about the coffee project and other Compañeros work.

This trip, I participated in a very special occasion. Once every two months, representatives from all the 17 cantons come to the Pastoral House for a

meeting. What a joy it was to be a part of the 50 in attendance this time.

They began straggling in around 8 a.m. for the 9 a.m. meeting. The Pastoral Team scurried to make huge pots of coffee and hand out pan dulce (sweet bread) to everyone. It is a great social time.

Jesús began by presenting a moving and powerful session about working together, community and faith. Then Balmore presented a 'workshop' on immigration – pulling thoughts and opinions from the audience and then educating them on alternatives and encouraging communities to work together and stay put to create better lives for themselves in their own homes!

Blanca needed help in the kitchen and called me out of the meeting (many blessings to her as I was getting a headache trying to keep up with the Spanish). We poured pineapple juice into 100 baggies and filled plates with food and bagged them.

Then it was my turn to speak. I had spent a couple hours the night before agonizing about what I should say. I didn't want to just stand up and say 'howdy'. I felt some responsibility as a representative of not only my church and Compañeros, but

also as a representative of all the churches in our Presbytery who have partnerships with the communities represented in that room!

I also felt I had an obligation to the Pastoral Team. This was a wonderful opportunity to express our gratitude and our need of the Pastoral Team. The relationship that the Presbytery of Des Moines, and many other denominations as well, have with our brothers and sisters in El Salvador could not be successful without the Pastoral Team.

They are the voice of their communities and they become our voice to our partner communities. And they do it so well. They serve with love, with the Holy Spirit always in their hearts and with respect for all. They encourage communities to work together... to stay united... to have common goals and to work together to create a better future for themselves and their families. They tirelessly (and voluntarily I might add) work for justice and inspire us to do the same. I hope I was able to convey that gratitude. A young Peace Corp volunteer translated for me. I needed the words to be correct and I was grateful for his skills.

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Then Blanca spoke to the people from each canton – getting and giving updates about work being done in their community. I learned that Don Justo profits had been used for a water collection roof in one canton as well as to provide desks and other supplies for a canton school! Que chivo! What an incredible morning! What a blessing to have witnessed this important piece of Pastoral Team life!

I learn during my solo visits that there are many pieces to the work of the Pastoral Team. I don't think any of us truly understand the scope of their service to their communities

and to us. I always leave humbled by their loving service and spirit. I also leave with the desire to do more; to work harder, to talk more and to reach out more to try to involve others in this important work.

We are all brothers and sisters. Place, language and the color of our skin are irrelevant. It is what is in our hearts that matters. Justice matters. Basic human needs need to be met. No small act of kindness or generosity is a waste.

My hope is that all of us will keep our hearts open to

possibilities; that we will all take time to learn of the realities of others, to see beyond our own reality. And with that education, my hope is that we will desire to work towards justice and do what is right.

Please consider joining the effort. Call me at 515-226-0892 or visit our Web site: www.oursisterparish.org to learn more and see how others have become involved. There are a myriad of ways to support this work.

*Yours in faith, Kathy Mahler
(Clive, Heartland) Compañeros
Project Coordinator for Don Justo,
Coffee with Dignity and
Sister of many in El Salvador*

We're on the Web!

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