

The Wider Circle



Presbytery of Des Moines 515-276-4991 / May 2009 Vol. 5, Issue 5



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

OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

- Fiesta Fundraising Success
- Congregational Connection
- Prayers and Concerns

Monthly Message: Answering the Higher Call



A monthly message for the church from the General Assembly's stated clerk.

By the Rev. Grady Parsons

LOUISVILLE — Maybe we need an Extreme Planet Make-over. As if 3.7 million people unemployed since January, tornadoes, and flooding were not enough, now we have swine flu. I am sure there are locusts warming up somewhere.

The difference between the first three disasters and swine flu is that the first three bring people together. Swine flu, on the other hand, makes us want to stay as far apart from each other as possible. People who are co-workers and neighbors suddenly become strangers in our midst if they show the slightest hint of a sniffle.

Barbara Brown Taylor has given us an excellent new book, *An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith* (HarperOne, 2009). Taylor explores our relationship with strangers in the chapter, "The Practice of Encountering Oth-

ers." Using Matt. 25:34-37 as a starting point, she explores the difference between philoxenia (love for the stranger) and xenophobia (fear of the stranger). Taylor points out that, for most of us, fear of the stranger comes much more naturally than the other.

It is impossible in a 2.2 million-member denomination for everyone to know each other. We can be strangers even in our own congregations. We can find ourselves greeting long-time members as visitors if they don't sit in our pew zone. We can also find ourselves excluding from our internal membership roll those with whom we don't readily agree.

We are coming to the end of the season of debate on the amendments to the *Book of Order* that were proposed by the 218th General Assembly (2008).

Some of the votes on

"Amendment B" have been surprising and close, which means the debates were probably very intense.

Having a strong difference of opinion can transform sisters and brothers in a presbytery into strangers, or move us closer to the community that God intends. For we are a church of strangers that God has chosen to call a people of faith. We must not become xenophobic, but answer the higher call to be philoxenic.

May the gracious love of God help us do just that, healing our hearts, souls and minds in Christ Jesus.

GROWING CHRIST'S CHURCH 'DEEP AND WIDE'

Presbytery-by-presbytery, the Presbyterian News Service is reporting on congregations around the PC(USA) who are engaged in innovative outreach programs in order to *Grow Christ's Church Deep and Wide* – a churchwide emphasis adopted by the 218th General Assembly (2008) to help congregations grow through evangelism, discipleship, servanthood and diversity. If you have a story to tell about a congregation that's growing Christ's church deep and wide, contact [Jerry Van Marter](#) or [Bethany Furkin](#) at the Presbyterian News Service, or tell **Des Moines Presbytery Communications Director Kim Coulter** at 515-276-4991.

To read about the response to this call, go to: www.pcusa.org/pcnews/deepandwide.htm.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Stated Clerk's Monthly Message	1
Growing Christ's Church Deep and Wide	1
Events Calendar	2
Congregational Connection	3
Employment Opportunities	3
PC(USA) Update	4
BOP Regional Rep News	4
PNS News Index	5
Synod Update	6
Presbytery Happenings	8
Prayers and Concerns	8
Swine Flu Update	8



Prepare for Pentecost

On Sunday, May 31, Christian churches throughout the world will celebrate the birth of the church at Pentecost with crepe paper streamers in the colors of fire, with "sounds" of the rushing wind during worship liturgy and with the retelling of the biblical story in Acts 2 of the Holy Spirit coming to empower the church. PC(USA) congregations collect the [Pentecost offering](#) on this special day www.pcusa.org/pentecost/.

THINGS TO MAKE & DO FOR PENTECOST

Detailed, easy-to-understand instructions for children's activities are provided by Martha Bettis Gee. Each activity offers a way for God's spirit to speak to children and to give children a vehicle for expression of ideas, feelings and concepts.

Events Calendar

MAY 2009

May 13 – Older Adult Ministry Task Force, 1 p.m., Presbytery Office, Urbandale.

May 14 – Presbytery Staff Meeting, 10:30 a.m. at Presbytery Office

May 17 – David M. Bailey, singer, songwriter and cancer survivor will present a free concert at **First Presbyterian Church in Newton**. David is fighting a recurring brain tumor and is currently being followed by CNN for a future story on survival. David's father is Dr. Ken Bailey and they have both written for *Presbyterian Today*. The concert begins at 7 p.m. For more information, call Amy at 641-521-9037 or go to www.davidmbailey.com.

May 18 – Retired Pastors' Luncheon, 12:30 p.m. at **Calvin Community**, West Dining Room, Program speaker is **Doug Kelly, Board of Pensions Representative**.

May 19 – Presbytery Stated Meeting at **Park Avenue Presbyterian Church, Des Moines**, registration begins at 1 p.m.

May 21 – Lunch & Learn Series, *Evaluating your Church's Communication Efforts*, Presbytery Office, Noon-1 p.m.

May 25 – **Memorial Day Holiday**, Presbytery Office is closed

May 28 – *Church Business Issues Workshop*, The Des Moines Chapter of the National Association of Church Business Administration is sponsoring a FREE 3-hour workshop to help answer questions such as; "Does your church handle donations according to IRS regulations? Do you have sufficient policies for the handling of your church finances? Does your current insurance policy cover misconduct claims? Do you know the most common safety risk for those at your church? Are you aware that you need to protect your church's non-profit status?" The workshop will be at Plymouth Congregational Church, 4126 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, from 9 a.m. to Noon. R.S.V.P. to Laurel Swanson at 967-4818 or laurel@iccaltoona.org.

JUNE 2009

June 2 – CCD, 2 p.m., **Westminster Presbyterian Church, Des Moines**

June 2 – Compañeros, 6:30 p.m. at **Westminster Presbyterian Church, Des Moines**

June 4 – **CROSS Ministries**, 7 p.m., Cottage Grove Ave. Presbyterian Church

June 6 – **Social Ministries Task Force**, 9 a.m., Presbytery Office

June 8 – PUP Task Force, 3 p.m. at the Presbytery Office

June 10 – Iowa EP/GPs, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. at the Presbytery Office

June 11-13 – The Big *Tent Conference*, The Hyatt Regency in Atlanta, Georgia. Programs meeting are: CPM/COM Conference; Elders Conference; Evangelism and Church Growth Conference; New Immigrant Groups; Presbyterian Communicators' Network; PHEWA/Social Justice Biennial Conference; Presbyterian Multicultural Conference; Presbyterian Peacemaking Program; Presbyterian Youth Connection; and the Racial Ethnic Convocation, Stewardship Conference.

June 16 – *Free Seminar for Older Iowans and Caregivers* dealing with questions of life planning and consumer issues; living wills and health care power of attorney; guardianships; conservatorships; Medicaid eligibility; predatory practices; and more. It's sponsored by the Iowa Department of Elder Affairs and Iowa Legal Aid Legal Hotline. The Des Moines area seminar is located at Ola Babcock Miller Building on E 12th & Grand in Room 308 and runs from Noon to 4 p.m. To register call 800-992-8161.

June 21 – Lunch & Learn Series, *Blogging 101 for Pastors*, Presbytery Office, Noon-1 p.m.

Congregational Connection

SPRING CLEANING BEGINS

The **Cottage Grove Avenue Presbyterian Church in Des Moines** wants to thank the work crew from the **First Presbyterian Church in Dallas Center**. They worked on the church basement March 28. The old kitchen floor was taken up and mold and mildew were removed from the walls. Several members from Cottage Grove also worked on that day.

HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR DEVOTES TIME TO SUNDAY SCHOOL

The **Cottage Grove Avenue Presbyterian Church in Des Moines** has benefited from the help of **David Moore**, a high school senior from the Des Moines Christian High School and a member of the **Westminster Presbyterian Church in Des Moines**. David has been assisting with Sunday School class activities for the several weeks as part of his senior service project. He will be missed as he heads off to college.

YOUTH FUNDRAISING GOES CITY WIDE

The **Heartland Presbyterian Church in Clive** and the **Windsor Presbyterian Church in Windsor Heights** will be sending their youth on a work trip again this summer. In order to send nearly 30-40 teens on this mission, the kids are trying a new approach for raising funds. The 7th-12th graders will be selling ice cream at the Des Moines Arts Festival this summer, June 26-28 in downtown Des Moines. The A&E stands will be at 5 different locations throughout the area.

PICNIC AT CALVIN COMMUNITY

The annual Calvin Family Picnic will be held on Sunday, June 7, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Friends and families are invited to join the Calvin Community staff and residents on the South Lawn for good food and fellowship at no charge. To learn more, go to their Web site

www.calvincommunity.org/,

or call 515-633-2600 to make your reservation. The free will donation will be taken to benefit the Good Samaritan Fund.

CROSS MINISTRIES HAS NEW WEB ADDRESS

CROSS Ministry Director Roberta Victor called our office with the news of a new Web site URL address for this local Des Moines ministry: www.crossministriesdm.org.

NEW PW MODERATOR ELECTED

The **Rev. Linda O'Connell**, pastor of **First Presbyterian Churches in Lucas and Chariton** has been elected moderator of Presbyterian Women for the Des Moines Presbytery. Her term began Saturday, April 25. As moderator, she will be a voting delegate at Presbyterian Women's Triennial Gathering in Louisville, Ky. in July. Congratulations! Also, past moderator, **Emily Seeger (Atlantic, First United)** is now corresponding secretary.

Attend DMARC Service Awards Luncheon May 21

This year's Des Moines Area Religious Council's Service Awards Luncheon will be held Thursday, May 21 at the Airport Holiday Inn, Fleur Drive in Des Moines. The luncheon will begin at 11:45 a.m. and end at 1:15 p.m.

Each year, DMARC recognizes individuals, churches and organizations that go above and beyond service in their community. This year, the honorees are: the Polk City United Methodist Church, Capital City Fruit, the Rev. Faith Ferre of the Plymouth Congregational Church in Des Moines (and a member of our Presbytery's **Khadamat Sudanिया** group) and the Rabbi David and Julie Kaufman of the Temple B'Nai Jeshurun in Des Moines for their inspiring contributions.

DMARC Director the Rev. Sarai Rice

(Presbytery member at-large), reminds us to get your tickets purchased by May 14.

The cost will be \$35, \$10 of which is tax-deductible. Go to DMARC's Web site at: www.dmreligious.org, for information on how you can register, e-mail info@dmreligious.org or call 515-277-6969.

Employment Opportunities

Director of Children's Education Ministries, United Methodist Church, West Des Moines, Ia.

West Des Moines United Methodist Church is seeking someone for this 3/4-time position. The person in this job will provide leadership, coordination and supervision

for children's programs from birth – 6th grade including Sunday School, Nursery, Wednesday Night Live, Vacation Bible School and more. Strong relational, organization and communication skills as well as the ability to identify and empower program

leaders, teachers, volunteers are desired. Resumes can be submitted via fax at 515-279-3523 or by e-mail to Pastor Barrie Tritle at britle@wdmumc.org. For a complete job announcement, visit www.wdmumc.org.

PCUSA Update

AMENDMENT B IS DEFEATED PRESBYTERIES KEEP "FIDELITY AND CHASTITY" ORDINATION STANDARD

Though the formal results await certification by the Office of the General Assembly, all unofficial tallies show that Amendment B - which would replace the current Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) constitutional requirement that church officers live in "fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman or chastity in singleness" with a new section G-

6.0106b of The Book of Order - has been defeated.

After voting on Saturday, April 25, the count is 69 presbyteries in favor with 88 opposed - one more than the majority of 87 out of 173 presbyteries required to decide the matter.

To read the complete story go online to:

www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/09339.

PDA: SWINE FLU UPDATE

Public health officials, including the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](http://www.cdc.gov) and

the [World Health Organization](http://www.who.int), have confirmed that since Friday, April 24, an outbreak of Swine Influenza A (H1N1) or "swine flu" appears to have originated in Mexico where more than 100 people have died. Since Friday the flu has begun to spread rapidly across the United States - it is now confirmed in California, Texas, New York City, Kansas and Ohio.

On Sunday, April 26, 2009, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

declared a public health emergency. The WHO has declared the swine flu outbreak a "public health event of international concern."

Resources for more information on Swine Flu:

- [Centers for Disease Control: Swine Flu Updates Page](#).
- [Swine Flu Key Facts](#): Provides facts about Swine Influenza.
- [Swine Flu and You](#): Provides answers to questions about Swine Influenza.
- [Swine Flu Video Podcast](#): In this video, Dr. Joe Bresee, with the CDC Influenza Division, describes swine flu - its signs and symptoms, how it's transmitted, medicines to treat it, steps people can take to protect themselves from it, and what people should do if they become ill.

Find out how your congregation can prepare to respond to this crisis. [Learn more](#) at: www.pcusa.org/pda/pandemic-flu.htm.

To learn more read the Presbyterian News Service article, [Presbyterians respond cautiously to swine flu outbreak](#): Presbyterian Disaster Assistance posts general guidelines. Go online to: www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/09367.htm.

BOP Regional Rep's E-NEWSLETTER—MAY 2009

[LONG-TERM CARE INSURANCE BOARD OF PENSIONS AND CNA OFFER OPEN ENROLLMENT FOR LONG TERM CARE NOW THROUGH MAY 31.](#)

The Board of Pensions is offering enrollment into the Long Term Care plan on a guaranteed basis. This means they will not ask medical questions of eligible employees who are actively employed on the coverage date, July 1. If it never seemed possible that you would qualify for long term care coverage, this is your chance. Also, members' spouses, parents, and grandparents (up to age 90), including in-laws, are eligible to enroll, but they are subject to standard medical underwriting approval. Visit the [Board of Pensions for more information](#), or login to [the CNA site for an application](#) (password: pcusa). Go to [Long-Term Care Insurance Webinar](#) to view replay. Call CNA at 800-528-4582 for an enrollment kit.

[NEW MAXIMUM FOR SEMINARY DEBT ASSISTANCE GRANTS EFFECTIVE JUNE 1](#)

Effective June 1, 2009, the maximum grant available to newly ordained ministers serving small congregations through the Seminary Debt Assistance Grant program is \$1,500 (each year for a total of four years). The grants will be made to ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are serving churches with fewer than 150 members and a budget of less than \$250,000 to assist them in repaying educational debt incurred while they were seeking a Master of Divinity degree. The minister should be in his or her first seven years of ministry and serving a full-time called position. For info or an [application](#), visit www.pensions.org.

[MIDDLE GOVERNING BODY GRANTS APPLICATION DEADLINE IS AUGUST 15](#)

[Applications](#) for a 2010 Middle Governing Body Grant are due by August 15, 2009. For additional details about this assistance program, visit Pensions.org. Please note that the new guidelines governing Middle Governing Body Grants, which permit the Board to award 10 matching grants per year of up to \$15,000 per grant, are effective for all new grants.

The Presbytery of Des Moines' regional representative is the Rev. Dr. Douglas Kelly. He can be reach at the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (USA), 1302 Platte Falls Rd., Ste. D PMB 211, Platte City, MO 64079, Phone: 800-511-0132 or 800-773-7752, ext. 7045, Fax: 816-431-6117, Email: dkelly@pensions.org.

News Index for April 2-May 8

- [Presbytery and synod news](#)
- [Ecumenical Advocacy Days draws veterans, newcomers](#) 100 of 700 participants in seventh annual event are Presbyterians
- [College news](#)
- [Staff reduction announced at the Presbyterian Foundation](#) Number of regional development offices reduced from 16 to 10
- [New book chronicles Latino Protestantism in the U.S.](#) "Los Evangélicos" highlights history of 'quietly thriving community'
- [Seminary news](#)
- [Youth Ministries Task Force membership is announced](#) 15-member panel is the last of six groups named by GA Moderator
- [A life the church is compelled to live](#) A monthly column for the church by the GA moderator
- [Hog Heaven](#) Harley-riding Illinois pastor extends ministry to biker world
- [PC\(USA\) pension plan remains fully funded](#) But investment losses mean no 'experience apportionment' in 2009
- [Great loss, great harvest](#) A monthly column for the church by the General Assembly stated clerk
- [Communication and resurrection](#) An Easter reflection by a PC(USA) mission worker in Guatemala
- [Setting the stage for peace](#) Young Adult Volunteer brings theater background to year of service
- [Mary Jane Patterson dies](#) Presbyterian elder led Washington Office for 13 years
- [Seminary news](#)
- [Bruce blogs Bay Area](#) Reyes-Chow part of San Francisco Chronicle's 'City Brights' group blog
- [New York faith leaders call for immigration reform](#) New York City Presbytery among 20 groups seeking 'just and humane' change as part of interfaith effort
- [18 congregation-based community organizing groups to share \\$92,500](#) Grants support local efforts such as affordable housing, job creation
- [One church's 'crazy idea' allows another to be reborn](#) California congregation reaches out to one in New Orleans
- [Water for Malawi](#) Shallow wells have profound impact on community health
- [Tornado tears through Tennessee](#) Presbyterian Disaster Assistance helping with long-term recovery
- [Notes about people](#)
- [PDA and Hurricane Katrina: in it for the long run](#) 1.2 million volunteer hours in, Presbyterians still going to Gulf region
- [Kingdom come](#) New partnerships, ministries help PC(USA)'s Russia mission flourish
- ['Something out of nothing'](#) Clergy couple building new church in South Carolina
- [\[OGA\] GA Middle East study team concludes its first meeting](#) Gathering underscores complexity of team's task
- [\[OGA\] Inquiry of Evangelical Presbyterian Church is underway](#) Task force visits PC(USA) presbyteries where congregations have left
- [Guess who's coming to dinner](#) Iowa congregation reaches out with mealtime community gatherings
- [Minister of reconciliation](#) As area coordinator, Insik Kim sought to break down barriers
- [PC\(USA\) agencies back Obama's nuke-free proposals](#) 50 years of GA policy supports nuclear weapons ban, they say
- [CBS to televise interfaith special on poverty](#) NCC partners with Catholic, Jewish, Muslim groups on April 26 program
- [Amendment B nears defeat](#) Presbyteries on verge of keeping 'fidelity and chastity' ordination standard
- [Northern Michigan Presbyterians help plant 12,000 trees in honor of Earth Day 2009](#) Interfaith group expresses care for God's creation
- [WARC visit prompts heavy debate in formerly pro-apartheid South African church](#)
- [Setting the record straight](#) Palestinian TV producer seeks to present world a different view of Palestine
- [Going the distance](#) Presbytery of Yukon partners with Taiwanese presbytery to better serve each other's indigenous groups
- [Memorial service set for Carl Dudley](#) Pastor, educator was innovative leader in connecting church, community
- ['A whole new way of doing mission'](#) Life-style changes at home benefit mission partners elsewhere, pastor finds
- [College news](#)
- [Robert B. Smith dies](#) Served as pastor, mission advocate, Board of Pensions staffer
- [Christian Peace Witness continues to press for end to Iraq war](#) Ecumenical group gathering in Washington April 29-30
- [Rest for the weary](#) Alzheimer's center provides community, respite for afflicted and caregivers
- [Church leaders write in response to amendment voting](#) 'Church has learned better how to talk about difficult issues...'
- [So who was John Calvin?](#) PC(USA)'s Gill says understanding 16th century context is essential
- [Buying local, going global](#) PA church's farmers market supports Presbyterian Hunger Program
- [Parsons joins call for review of post-9/11 interrogations](#) Letter to President Obama urges non-partisan Commission of Inquiry
- [Interfaith bridge building](#) Amid the tumult of occupation, Palestinian pastor works for reconciliation
- [Poll: Americans change religious affiliation early, often](#) Many reasons given, but patterns emerge, research shows
- [Finding a vision for the future by discovering the past](#) Presbyterian church first established in 1846 to be demolished to provide affordable housing for seniors
- [Notes about people](#)
- [Past scholarship winner remains grateful to PC\(USA\)](#) Recipient puts education to use with the All Africa Conference of Churches
- [Small is beautiful](#) In sparsely Presbypopulated Maine, church reaches out to Sudanese
- [Survival of the wisest](#) Indigenous peoples share knowledge about combating climate change
- [PNS review task force is set to meet](#) Six-member group will examine role, effectiveness, funding, editorial freedom of PC(USA)'s news agency
- [The human face of partnership](#) PC(USA) pastor's concern for Filipino human rights is rooted in his mission connection
- [Presbyterian Hymnal committee holds second meeting](#) Committee gets new name, hears report on hymn survey
- [WARC essay contest to focus on Calvin's take on environmental, financial stewardship](#) Lombard Essay Competition helps mark Reformer's 500th birthday
- [The pluck of the Irish](#) Presbyterian Church in Ireland's moderator-designate looks to blogging as way to better communicate in tough financial times
- [PC\(USA\) publications garner 18 Associated Church Press awards](#) PNS leads with six prizes, including 'Best in Class'; HORIZONS takes five
- [Stepping out](#) Florida Presbytery promotes simple actions that can make big environmental difference

Mark your Calendars for Congregational Leadership Workshop



Church leaders are invited to attend a Des Moines Presbytery sponsored conference on Sunday afternoon,

Oct. 18, 2009 and Monday, Oct. 19.

Presentation speaker is **the Rev. Dr. Peter Steinke**, a Lutheran pastor from Austin, Texas. He has served as a parish pastor for 15 years; a therapist for clergy for 14 years; and as an internationally known church consultant for 10 years. He is the author of the best selling books:

- *How Your Church Family Works*
- *Healthy Congregations*
- *Congregational Leadership in anxious Times: Being Calm and Courageous No Matter What*

Viewing churches as living, breathing, organisms, Dr. Steinke evaluates the health of a congregation using the family systems theory.

The Des Moines Presbytery's **Professional Care and Development Committee** is sponsoring the event. Cost is to be determined.

Synod of Lakes and Prairies Update

The following is from the **Committee on Local Arrangements (COLA) for the [219th General Assembly](#) which will be held July 3-10, 2010 in Minneapolis.**

The Committee on Local Arrangements (COLA) for General Assembly 2010 needs your help looking for a few committee leaders:

Worship – opening worship service (Sunday, July 4) and daily worships during Assembly.

Special events – moderator's reception and 4th of July event; young adult advisory delegate event; cultural and mission tours.

Hospitality – welcome commissioners and visitors at the airport, hotels and convention center.

Volunteers – recruit, train, assign and organize volunteers.

Communication & Media – publicity and communication with congregations and media; opening welcome presentation,

If you know of anyone with gifts of leadership in one (or more) of these areas please forward their name, contact information and anything you consider relevant about their experience or skills to a COLA member. Secondly, we've begun our search for an Executive Coordinator who will work with

COLA and the Office of the General Assembly to help plan, coordinate and report on COLA activities. The coordinator is accountable to the Office of the General Assembly but works closely with the local committee. This is a term position of 11-12 months beginning in mid- to late August. Applications are due on or before May 15, 2009 by e-mail (preferred) to PCUSACOLA2010@aol.com or send to COLA 2010, c/o Sandra Hawley, 7724 W. 85th St. Cir., Bloomington MN 55438. You may download the [volunteer request letter](#) and the [Executive Coordinator job description](#) to share with others.

Thanks for your help!

~ **2010 COLA Committee:**

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SYNOD PRESBYTERIES PARTICIPATE IN MISSION CHALLENGE

Twelve of the 16 presbyteries in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies have already committed to participate in World Mission Challenge this fall when 40 Presbyterian Church

(U.S.A.) mission personnel will travel into the presbyteries to tell of God's work around the world. Speakers will be on the road from Sept. 25 through Oct. 18. Additional information about World Mission Challenge is available at www.pcusa.org/missionchallenge/

MULTICULTURAL CHURCH SUNDAY SLATED MAY 17

On Sunday, May 17, Presbyterians of all ethnicities and cultures will gather to celebrate Multicultural Church Sunday. On this this day, congregations are encouraged to celebrate a diverse membership by worshiping with music, languages, arts and theological expressions from varying cultures. More information about multicultural churches can be found online at www.pcusa.org/multicultural/index.htm. A story about a Twin Cities Area Presbytery multicultural church, Church of All Nations in Columbia Heights, Minn., can be found at www.pcusa.org/multicultural/allnations.htm.

SYNOD SCHOOL REGISTRATION FORMS ON WEB SITE

Synod School 2009 registration materials are online at: www.lakesandprairies.org/school.html. Synod School 2009 runs Sunday through Friday, July 26-31, at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa. This year's theme is "Building a Culture of Peace."

Presbytery Happenings

FIESTA FUNDRAISING A SUCCESS

Compañeros would like to thank all those who participated in and supported this year's fundraising dinner.

On Friday, April 24, Compañeros held the Annual Fundraising Dinner – this year's theme "Fiesta Fundraiser." This year's dinner had a different format than years past, with the dinner being held on a Friday evening and encompassed a social hour with live music, a sit down dinner, a silent auction, a DJ and dance, and live web cam with **Kathy Mahler** and the Pastoral Team in Berlin, El Salvador.



The event was a success on many different levels. More than 175 people purchased

tickets for this year's event. This is more than double previous years' attendance. The silent auction and live web cam was a special addition. Compañeros raised more than \$3,500 after expenses – this too being an increase from previous years.

The annual dinner is one of the largest fundraisers that Compañeros holds throughout the year. The success of this event goes toward helping us keep a mission co-worker on the ground in El Salvador. The support was overwhelming. We have received much positive feedback from the event – "the atmosphere was wonderful and the pork chops were delicious," "I loved being able to visit with Kathy and the Pastoral Team," and "it was wonderful to meet so many people who came together for the same reason."

Many thanks go out to the multitude of people who helped with this year's dinner. To mention a few, St. Boniface Catholic Church for being the host, Barb Arkwright and her wonderful group of kitchen workers, the Knights of Columbus for serving, Culver's for providing the ice cream at a discount, Fareway in Waukee for providing some ingredients at cost, The Burger Family in Waukee for donating all of the pork chops, and Jerel Merical and Lou Fusco for providing the live musical entertainment.

Sincere thanks to all. If you have questions or comments, please feel free to contact **Compañeros Moderator Joe Pirtle** at 515-250-5857 or jpirtle13@hotmail.com. We look forward to next year's dinner!



Prayers and Concerns

Join us in prayer for the following:

Social Ministries Task Force Moderator Nancy Lister Settle a member of the **First Presbyterian Church in Dallas Center** is announcing her son's upcoming wedding. Morgan Johnson is getting married on June 13 to Penny Worthington. Congratulations!

The **Rev. Goanar and Batul Chol's** son, **Lam**, is graduating from Hoover High School May 22. Another Presbytery staff member, **Kim and Matt Coulter** have a daughter, **KayLynn**, who is graduating from Valley High School May 31. Both students will be attending the University of Northern Iowa in the fall.

The **Rev. Tiare Mathison** of the **First Presbyterian Church in Newton** is taking a sabbatical leave May through July.

The **Rev. Lynn Williams** of **First Presbyterian Church in Grimes** is home after having surgery. He covets your prayers while undergoing chemotherapy for prostate cancer.

The **First Presbyterian Church in Dallas Center Pastor David Ewing's** father passed away on May 12. Funeral services are pending and will be in Wisconsin. **Lorena Blount**, wife of the **Rev. Ross Blount** of **United Presbyterian Church in Allerton** had a pacemaker implanted the end of April and is home recovering.

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The Wider Circle *is published monthly by the Presbytery of Des Moines, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). To learn more about the Presbytery of Des Moines, 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.*

Fact Sheet: Swine Flu and Pandemic Flu

From a special edition of www.SafeChurch.com's weekly Safety Watch.

WHAT IS SWINE FLU?

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), swine influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses. While people do not normally get swine flu, human infections with a particular strain of swine influenza A (H1N1) have been confirmed in several U.S. states, Mexico and a few other countries.

The CDC has determined that this H1N1 virus is contagious and is spreading from human to human. However, at this time, it not known how easily

the virus spreads between people.

WHAT IS THE CONCERN?

This H1N1 strain of influenza could lead to a pandemic, or global outbreak, of the disease. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *pandemic flu* is a virulent human flu that causes a global outbreak of serious illness. Because there is little natural immunity, the disease can spread easily from person to person. Currently, there is no pandemic flu.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

The H1N1 flu in humans usually begins much like seasonal flu, with symptoms, such as fever, cough, sore throat, body aches,

headaches, chills, fatigue and, in some cases, diarrhea and vomiting. It can only be confirmed by laboratory testing.

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT?

Currently, the primary treatment option is antiviral flu medications available by prescription only and usually work best if taken within two days of onset of viral symptoms.

WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT SWINE FLU?

The CDC recommends the same precautions against the H1N1 flu as against seasonal flu. For more info, contact the GuideOne Center for Risk Management at 877-448-4331, ext. 5118 for church and schools, or ext. 5175 for Senior Living Communities.

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