



The Wider Circle E-News

Mark your calendars this week for:

- **Apr. 22** – *Earth Day*
- **Apr. 22** – Coordinating Council Meeting, 4 p.m., Calvin Community, Des Moines
- **Apr. 24** – Cool Congregations' Stewardship Program at **Trinity United Presbyterian Church**, 200 S. Howard St., **Indianola**, IA 50125. Bring a team from your congregation to this training workshop. Learn how to get your faith community involved in caring for God's creation by reducing energy use, which in turn reduces the pollution causing climate change and save money! Co-hosted by Crossroads United Church of Christ, First United Methodist and Redeemer Lutheran. Register online at www.iowaip.org/calendar or contact **Kathie Farris**, KatFarris@aol.com or 515-961-7647. Cool Congregations is a program of Iowa Interfaith Power & Light, www.iowaip.org.
- **Apr. 24** – General Assembly Commissioner Orientation, First Presbyterian Church, Marshalltown. This is for GA Commissioners from Iowa.
- **Apr. 24** – Celebrate spring and help our Sudanese neighbors at **Cottage Grove Avenue Presbyterian Church in Des Moines** with Spring Cleaning! **Dates:** April 24, May 1 or May 8 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Lunch will be pizza! E-mail **Ginny Hancock**, ginnyvah@aol.com, with the date you want to reserve, your church name, contact person (e-mail and phone) and number of participants.
- **Apr. 25** – *Rural Life Sunday*
- **Apr. 26** – Khadamat Sudaniya, 4 p.m., **Cottage Grove Avenue Presbyterian Church, Des Moines**
- **Apr. 27** – Lectionary study, 10 a.m.-Noon, Presbytery Office, Urbandale
- **Apr. 27** – Retired pastors luncheon, 12:30-2:30 p.m., **Calvin Community, Des Moines**
- **Apr. 28** – Southwest Regional Partnership meeting, 11:30 a.m., **First Presbyterian Church, Corning**
- **Apr. 29** – Presbytery staff meeting and lunch, 10 a.m., Presbytery Office
- **Apr. 30** – Budget & Finance Committee meeting, Noon, Presbytery Office

Joys and Concerns

Congratulations go out to the **Rev. Adam Nardini (member-at-large)** who is announcing his engagement and pending marriage, May 29, to Rachel Geilenfeld of Clear Lake, Iowa. Rachel is a graduate of Iowa State University and is currently pursuing a law degree and masters at the University of Iowa. Adam was former pastor at the **Union Park Presbyterian Church in Des Moines** and youth pastor at **First Presbyterian Church in Grimes**. He is currently pursuing a medical degree at Duke University.

Okoboji Camp Nurses Needed for Summer!

The Presbyterian Camp on Okoboji is looking for nurses, doctors, EMTs, or any person with equivalent certifications, that would love to spend a week on West Lake at the camp! If you are interested in spending a Sunday through Saturday at camp dispensing meds, administering first aid, and simply having a great week with campers and staff, then this is the volunteer job for you! Questions? Contact Heather Stanek at 712-337-3313 or heather.stanek@presbycamp.org.

Spring Connection Reminder

First Presbyterian Church in Oskaloosa is hosting the Spring Youth retreat, April 23-24. Youth (grades 6-12) and their leaders are encouraged to attend this awesome retreat with the theme of *Clue? Christ Style!* This year the two-day weekend retreat will be FREE so families who have suffered job loss, etc. during these economic hard times, can still send youth and not worry about the cost. There is still time to register. Contact the **Oskaloosa Church Middle School Youth Leader Jodi Wilson** at 641-295-3765 or bruceandjodi@mahaska.org or bring your completed registration form with you Friday evening.

April 20, 2010

www.presbyteryofdesmoines.org



We are located at:

2400 86th Street, Suite 20
Urbandale, IA 50322-4306
515-276-4991

officeinfo@presbyteryofdesmoines.org

Office Hours are:

8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily

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- *New Horizons* Helps Meet Non-Traditional Needs of Grinnell Students
- Attend Luncheon & Conversation with Mark Braverman, April 27
- Watch *Garbage Dreams* on IPTV, April 28
- Revitalize Personal & Spiritual Finances with IRMS Study Course
- PC(USA) Seminary Partners Take Note
- May is Bike Month. Iowa Bicyclists Need to Register Now; it's FREE!
- Presbyterian Association of Musicians Meets July 11-16
- COLA Looks for Volunteers to be Prayer Partners for the 219th General Assembly
- Apply for a SDOP Grant Now!

New Horizons Helps meet Non-Traditional Needs of Grinnell Students

Obviously New Years day is not a “religious” holiday, but I am beginning to think we should celebrate it that way. After all, we believe in a God who is alive and still active in our world – always doing new things and inspiring new possibilities. And this is certainly true at our church! So many new things have happened this past year, and so many more will happen in the year to come. Here are just two of the new things that are happening right now at **First Presbyterian Church in Grinnell**.

There’s a *new approach* to addressing the cycle of poverty. Our church has always been incredibly generous when it comes to helping people in poverty. We give time, resources and money to programs like Mica, Heifer, Kids Against Hunger, Sudanese Ministry of the Des Moines Presbytery, No Room at the Inn, and many others. Each of these groups addresses some aspect of poverty in our community or in the larger world. They depend on support from people just like us to really make a difference in people’s lives. We also give money directly to people who come to the church in crisis and need short term, emergency help. All of this work is essential, and certainly is part of what being Christian is about.

However, often these things don’t address the systemic problems of poverty. Think, for example, about people who need to buy a refrigerator. Most of us, while it wouldn’t be the most fun thing to spend money on, if we need one, we buy one. For some, they don’t have enough money to buy one all at once. They are forced to enter into a rent-to-own contract with businesses. They only have to pay some every month, but there is a cost to this service. Consequently, those who can afford it the least are paying the most for their appliances and furniture. We can who afford it get to avoid all the extra costs of being poor.

That’s just one example of the cost of being poor. There are many more. Recognizing this, our congregation, and now the whole community of Grinnell, have started a micro loan program that works with people in these exact situations. We give no interest loans to people for things like purchasing appliances, and then they can still make monthly payments but at no extra cost to them. These loans are also used to help people get out from under (what I think are criminal) “Pay day loans”. We can help people who had a gap in employment catch up on back rent. And I’m sure you, like me, can imagine the endless possibilities.

One obvious advantage to this program is that it keeps on giving. As people pay back their loans the money is available to someone else in a similar situation. This is the community supporting each other in new and innovative ways!

A second “new” thing comes by way of *New Horizons*. *New Horizons* is a part of the Grinnell – Newburg public school system. They serve non-traditional students, helping them earn their high school degree. Many, if not most, of these students are dealing with far more in their lives than just homework and friendships. Many have children; many lack basic necessities like clothing, food and shelter; many come from broken and abusive relationships.

The administrators, teachers and volunteers at *New Horizons* are some of the most dedicated people I know. They have struggled to figure out how to meet the non-traditional needs of these students, when there is no place in the public school budget for such things as buying a blanket for someone, or getting someone emergency shelter for a night. There really is no shortage of people who want to help, financially, but the administrators had no structural way to match the generosity with the need. Our church is now the structural way. We have a *New Horizons* fund that people can donate to, and then the folks at *New Horizons* can use that money in ways that they know it is needed.

Newness is all around. Maybe there *is* something “religious” about the New Year. It reminds us that God is doing new things – through us and in us. So celebrate the New Year with prayers of thanksgiving for such a God, and with acts of giving and service that honor such a generous God.

– Rev. Kirsten Klepfer,
Grinnell First Presbyterian Church

Attend Luncheon & Conversation with Mark Braverman, April 27

The American Friends Service Committee – Middle East Peace Education Project (AFSC-MEPEP) in partnership with the Grace United Methodist Church – Church & Society Committee invites you to a lunch and conversation with Mark Braverman, *Beyond Interfaith Dialogue: The Role of the Faith Communities in the Quest for Peace in the Holy Land*.

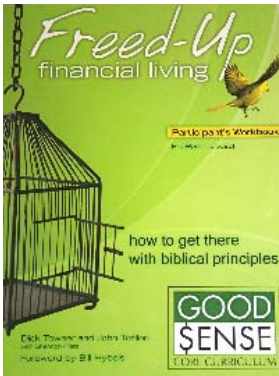
Braverman, a Jewish American psychologist with deep roots in the Holy Land, grew up in the Jewish tradition, studied the Bible, Hebrew literature, Jewish history, and spent time with his family in Israel. In 2006 he returned to the Holy Land and was transformed by witnessing the occupation of Palestine. Returning to the US, Braverman now devotes himself full time to the Israeli – Palestinian conflict and the work for peace. Braverman is author of the recently released *Fatal Embrace: Christians, Jews, and the Search for Peace in the Holy Land*. His book and work focus on the role of religious beliefs and theology in the current discourse on Israel-Palestine.

This private lunch with Mark Braverman and Christian clergy and lay people is Tuesday, April 27, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at Grace United Methodist Church, 3700 Cottage Grove, Des Moines. This is intended as an opportunity to explore questions related to a faithful response to the violence in the Holy Land, and what role Christians are called to play in it. For more information go to www.markbraverman.org. Please RSVP by April 15 to AFSC Iowa Program Coordinator Kathleen McQuillen, kmcquillen@afsc.org or 515-274-4851, ext. 22.

Watch Garbage Dreams on IPTV, April 28

The **Des Moines Presbytery’s Joining Hands** team would like to promote *Garbage Dreams* which is airing on Iowa Public Television, Wednesday, April 28, 8 a.m., 2 p.m., and 7 p.m. A Joining Hands-Egypt partner (A.P.E.) has been working in the garbage collectors community for years and this film is an excellent depiction of how they have turned this lowly job into opportunity. You can find more information at www.IPTV.org or www.garbage dreams.com.

Revitalize Personal and Spiritual Finances with IRMS Study Course



Freed-Up Financial Living (DV874) is a new program that refreshes and expands upon the principles of the *Good Sense Budget Course* (KT159). Developed at Willow Creek Church in Illinois, this in-depth guide explores healthy earning, giving and living, using Biblical teaching. It provides practical tips to help participants achieve their own financial, personal and spiritual goals while reducing debt and giving to the church. IRMS has two copies of the new resource, which includes a DVD and participant's workbook. The facilitator's guide and promotional materials can be downloaded at www.GoodSenseMinistry.com. The course is adaptable for use in seminar, small group or individual usage. To check it out, go to the online IRMS library www.irms.org, click on Search the Catalog, then enter the resource name or number.



May is Bike Month. Iowa Bicyclists Need to Register Now; it's FREE!



Anyone doing the official *Bike to Work Challenge* or *Bike to Church* needs to register. There are activities throughout the month, and registration is open through Noon, May 20. All Iowans are encouraged to register at www.bikeiowa.com/asp/bike/default.asp. These numbers are shared with policy makers throughout the state. If your area does not have an organizing committee; [send a request](#) for assistance. Registration closes at Noon on Friday, May 21, 2010. [Questions?](#) Go online to: www.bikeiowa.com/asp/bike/Questions.asp.

PC(USA) Seminary Partners Take Note

It is not too late to register for the for-credit cooperative course at the 219th General Assembly, *Presbyterianism: Principles and Practice*. You can find the course flier, registration form, and syllabus on the PC(USA) Web site at: www.pcusa.org/seminaries/students.htm. Please forward this information and link to everyone, especially seminarians who might be interested in taking this course. Questions? Contact Coordinator for Theological Education and Seminary Relations Lee Hinson-Hasty, DMin, General Assembly Mission Council, Committee on Theological Education, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 100 Witherspoon St/ Louisville, KY 40202, Lee.Hinson-Hasty@pcusa.org or 502-569-5357.



Presbyterian Association of Musicians Meets July 11-16

PAM will meet at Westminster College in Pennsylvania. The theme for the conference is *A Psalm for All Seasons: Stewardship of the Earth; Lament; Peace; Thanksgiving; Praise*. The faculty will include Hal Hopson, well-known expert on music and the Psalms. For more information, download a [conference brochure](#) or visit the PAM Web site: www.presbymusic.org/westminster.html.

COLA Looks for Volunteers to be Prayer Partners for the 219th General Assembly

by Duane Sweep, Special to Presbyterian News Service

MINNEAPOLIS — This July several thousand Presbyterians will attend the [219th General Assembly](#) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Minneapolis. But there are many more who would like to be at the Assembly, but can't attend because of time, distance or other commitments.

There is, however, a way for all to participate. While many local Presbyterians will serve in ministries of hospitality during the Assembly, showing commissioners and visitors alike the neighborliness that is characteristic of Presbyterians, others can help through prayer.

The Committee on Local Arrangements (COLA) is looking for about 1,000 people who are willing to serve as prayer partners, said Lois Potter, a member of Calvin Presbyterian Church in Long Lake, Minn., and coordinator of the committee's Prayer Partner Work Group. Each prayer partner will be given the name of a commissioner or advisory delegate and asked to pray for them throughout the Assembly.

All are welcome to become a prayer and can volunteer to be one by registering as a volunteer on the [COLA Web site](#) and selecting "prayer partner." Those who are not able to register online can contact Potter at 763-497-1601 or the COLA office at 612-871-2617. www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2010/10332.htm.



219TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2010)
MINNEAPOLIS



Apply for a SDOP Grant Now!

The PC(USA) Committee on the Self-Development of People (SDOP) is prepared to establish partnerships with groups in the U.S. or other countries who are oppressed by poverty or social systems, are organizing to do something about their current condition to produce long-term changes for their lives or communities and will control the programs they own and benefit from them directly. Partnerships are initiated by applications to the SDOP Committee and are evaluated against Self-Development's funding criteria. [Applications](#) are accepted at any time, but the process takes up to six months of when the application is received until it is validated and funded by the National Committee. To initiate partnerships with Presbytery and Synod committees contact them directly. Contact the Synod and Presbytery SDOP Committee for their deadlines and methods of submission. Submit online at: www.pcusa.org/sdop/applicationprocess.htm, or mail to: Self-Development of People, 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY 40202

To remove your name from our mailing list, e-mail Kim Coulter pbycommunication@presbyteryofdesmoines.org. Learn more at: www.presbyteryofdesmoines.org. Questions? Contact officeinfo@presbyteryofdesmoines.org or 515-276-4991.