



The Wider Circle E-News

Mark your calendars this week for:

- **Jan. 1** – New Year's Day Holiday, Presbytery Office is closed for winter break.
- **Jan. 4** – Presbytery Office reopens
- **Jan. 5** – Lectionary Study, 10 a.m.-Noon, Presbytery Office
- **Jan. 6** – *Epiphany of the Lord*
- **Jan. 8-9** – Winter Youth Retreat for leaders and youth (grades 6-12), join us for fun and tubing at Sleepy Hollow Sports Park, 4051 Dean Ave., Des Moines. Sponsored by the **Camping/Youth Ministries Task Force**. *IgeekGod!* is the theme. Activities begin Friday, 7 p.m. and kids can be picked Saturday, 2 p.m. If you would like to participate, Registration materials are online at www.presbyteryofdesmoines.org/resources.htm. Or contact **Task Force Moderator Dennis Britson** at dnbritson@aol.com or 515-988-1360. The total cost is \$30 and includes meals and snow tubing.
- **Jan. 9** – Social Ministries Task Force, 9 a.m., Presbytery Office
- **Jan. 10** – *Baptism of the Lord*
- **Jan. 10** – Elder Training event for Southwest Regional Partnership, Sunday from 1:30-4 p.m. with a weather date the next week: Sunday, Jan. 17.
- **Jan. 12** – Lectionary Study, 10 a.m.-Noon, Presbytery Office
- **Jan. 16** – Presbytery Meeting, First United Presbyterian Church, Atlantic, Ia.

Joys and Concerns

Congratulations to the **honorably retired Rev. John Beran** who is announcing his engagement to Rita Ibbotson of Tingley, Ia. Rita is a missionary-nurse serving with the Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM) in Zimbabwe, Africa. An August 2010 wedding is being planned. Earlier in 2009, John made a six-week trip to Zimbabwe and plans to make another in January 2010. While there, he will visit mission programs of the PC(USA) Outreach Foundation in the capital city of Harare.

Prayers are needed for the **Rev. Ross Blount, pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Allerton**, who called with an update on his health. After having an angiogram in December, it has been determined that his heart is strong enough to have a bad valve finally fixed. Ross is scheduled for surgery on January 12. He will be laid up for awhile and will be needing prayers for the surgery and during his 5- to 6-week recovery period.



Congratulations to new great-grandparents, **the Revs. Dale and Linda O'Connell of the LeRoy/Humeston Parish and Chariton First and Lucas First Presbyterian churches**. The new great grandchild's name is Kaiden Witherspoon O'Connell and was born on Dec. 11, 2009, to their granddaughter Chelcee O'Connell. He weighed 7 lbs. 11.8 oz.

A prayer request came in this past week from **Social Ministries Task Force Moderator Nancy Lister-Settle**.

RELUFAs the Cameroon partner network and Christi Boyd is companionship facilitator and the editor of the PC(USA) *Joining Hands* newsletter. Christi writes: "We have an awful situation that needs prayer for a miracle. Danya, a wonderful American volunteer documentary maker has been with us for four months to make RELUFAs documentary. For many weeks she and Valéry have been traveling along the pipeline, visiting communities in Cameroon and Chad, visiting the oil fields, etc. and shooting over hundreds of hours of video. Several from RELUFAs staff have spent literally hundreds of hours transcribing the interviews, and a composition was made from a rough selection of clips. Danya was supposed to return to the U.S. this weekend, but did not catch a connecting flight in Paris. She was put up in a hotel by Air France, but after she returned from a stroll she found everything in her room stolen. Her \$20,000 camera, her computer and hard drives, including all the footage. This is crushing for her and devastating for our project. We need a miracle for these materials to be found and get back into Danya's hands!"

To read the latest *Joining Hands* newsletter, go online to: www.relufa.org/partners/jhnewsletter.htm.

Cottage Grove Avenue Celebrates Christmas with a Nativity Program!

The **Cottage Grove Avenue Presbyterian Church** congregation in Des Moines, celebrated the birth of our Lord Jesus in December. The nativity cast was a combination of the Sudanese kids and the American choir. Church member **Ann McGowan**, both music director and director of education, is pictured here with the children. Merry Christmas!



December 29, 2009

www.presbyteryofdesmoines.org



We are located at:

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Office Hours are:

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

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- Stewards Needed at the Uniting Reformed Council in Grand Rapids 2010
- Interested in April 2010 Trip to Geneva for Unity Seminar?
- Presbyterian Liaisons are Needed for Ecumenical & Interfaith Network

Request for help with Malawi Earthquake

A request for action came in from the **Rev. Suzanne Gorhau, First Presbyterian Church in Centerville**, who serves on the board of Marion Medical Mission (MMM), an organization that puts shallow wells in Malawi, Tanzania, and Zambia, Africa. Recently, there were several earthquakes in Malawi, and now thousands are homeless during the rainy season. MMM has an infrastructure already in place for immediate response. See: <http://marionmedical.org>. Please consider contributing or praying and passing this request on. Here is an excerpt from the MMM letter of action:

"Dear MMM friend! As you are aware Karonga/Kaporo, in the northernmost District in Malawi, got hit with the third earthquake in 12 days on Sunday, Dec. 20, 2009. This earthquake was a 6.0 (might have been a bit higher). The information we received from Jim McGill indicates 300,000 people displaced. Because it is the rainy season, people had returned to their damaged homes and many were wounded in this last earthquake. Since the Shallow Well Program has been working in the Karonga/Kaporo area for eight years we have an extensive infrastructure in place that can be used to help those now homeless. We contacted the relief organization Shelter Box and they have already shipped 200 tents, 200 blankets and 200 kitchen sets to Malawi and these supplies should arrive between Dec. 27, 2009 and Jan. 1, 2010. Much more is needed but Shelter Box did not hesitate to do what they could. We have purchased some plastic sheets for temporary shelter and some maize but much more is needed. Maize and food can be purchased in Malawi and what is needed is the money to buy it. MMM has committed to raise \$100,000 for food and plastic sheets. The need is much greater than this but with God's blessings this is what we plan to do. We are making a plea to you today to help us raise these funds. Will you help us? Know that we are moving as fast as we can. Please feel free to present our plea for assistance for Karonga/Kaporo earthquake victims to your churches, organizations and others. We need to authorize the purchase of the food plastic sheets ASAP. God bless, Merry Christmas."

*– Tom Logan, Marion Medical Mission,
1412 Shawnee Dr., Marion, IL 62959, Cell: 618-889-2616
tomjloganmmm@gmail.com or tommylogan@aol.com*

Stewards Needed at the Uniting Reformed Council in Grand Rapids 2010

The Uniting General Council's (UGC) North American Arrangements Committee and the organizing committee for the Reformed Youth Forum are needing volunteer stewards to apply for the Uniting Reformed Council to be held on the campus of Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., June 12-28, 2010. They have received many applications for stewards from outside North America, but need another 15 people from North America. This is a great opportunity for those who want to participate in and who value international friendships that develop on a team of stewards. Stewards serve in many capacities, including helping with floor management during debates, assisting delegates on arrival and departure, helping manage the flow of crowds at major events during the UGC, helping with documents, and interpretation equipment. This will also be an opportunity to learn about the international ecumenical movement, and be part of the biggest ecumenical event in the world for 2010. Besides the 60 steward's interaction among themselves, they will also have some time with other youth in the Reformed Youth Forum, some of whom will also be official delegates in the UGC.

Those interested may go to the Stewards page on the UGC Website, www.reformedchurches.org/stewards.html. No need to worry about the Nov. 15 deadline as then would like to fill this team completely by Jan. 31, 2010. For North Americans, who do not need a visa, we can receive applications later in this process, but we urge you to complete them before Jan. 1. For questions, contact Richard L. van Houten, General Secretary, Reformed Ecumenical Council, 2050 Breton Rd. SE, Ste 102, Grand Rapids, MI 49546, 616-949-2910, www.recweb.org. Or Rev. Carlos L. Malavé, Assistant Stated Clerk & Associate for Ecumenical Relations, Office of the General Assembly, 100 Witherspoon St., Louisville KY 40202, 888-728-7228 x5444, www.eif-pcusa.org/EcumenicalRelations/EcumenicalRelationsIntl.html#epc.

Interested in April 2010 Trip to Geneva for Unity Seminar?

The Geneva, Switzerland trip date is April 5-12, 2010, and is for youth, ministers of the Word and Sacrament, theological students, church officers, interested laypersons and executives of denominations and councils of churches (spouses welcome) are encouraged to apply. Early registration is encouraged as the seminar is limited to 12 persons. Participants need to be capable of a relaxed 15- to 20-minute walk to the Ecumenical Centre. This educational trip is designed to broaden our understanding on theological, social and global economic issues, such as interfaith dialogue, evangelism, globalization, church unity, justice and peace, ecumenical dialogue, the Reformed faith in the 21st century, among others. Participants will engage the staff of the World Council of Churches, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Conference of European Churches, Oikocredit and other ecumenical organizations based in Geneva. This is a great educational opportunity, including time for leisure and relaxation. For a [schedule](#) of events, a [brochure](#) and the [application](#) go online. For more information, go to the Web site: www.pcusa.org/dear/unity-seminar.htm.

Presbyterian Liaisons are Needed for Ecumenical & Interfaith Network

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations has given priority to making connections with presbyteries, asking them to name liaisons who will serve as links between presbytery and national activities in ecumenical and interfaith relations work. A resource more oriented to current events for their work, and for yours, is the PC(USA) Ecumenical & Interfaith News Network. This helpful and informative Web site is hosted by Paul Masquelier, liaison from San Jose Presbytery, and edited by Margaret Orr Thomas. Visit the Website: www.eif-pcusa.org/

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.
