

# THE VALLEY BRIDGE



May 19, 2015

## MAY 24: DAY OF PENTECOST

Acts 2:1-21 or Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 104:24-34, 35b; Romans 8:22-27 or Acts 2:1-21; John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

### Fellowship of Prayer: First Presbyterian Church of Round Lake

*Ruling Elders:* Linda Koning, LeAnne Meyer, Jerry Wood, Arnold Meyer, Lori Morrison (clerk), Randy Ling, Gordon Vogelaar and Robert Widman; *Church Secretary:* Becky DeJong; *Church Treasurers:* Becky DeJong and LaRae Wood; *Organists:* Becky DeJong and Betty Bosma; *Pianists:* Betty Bosma and Brenda Vogelaar; *Christian Education:* Anna Robinson, Jenny Bosma and Beth DeRoo; *Memorials:* LeAnne Meyer, Shirley Geertsema and Sandy Thompson; *Concerned Christians:* Sue Kruger, Betty Bosma and Jon Untiedt; *Presbyterian Women:* Becky DeJong, Karen Jurgensen, Sandy Sather, LeAnne Meyer, Jean Watje and Mary Ann Sather; *Groundskeepers:* Donna Watje and Bob Widman; *Media Consultants:* Jerry Wood, Donna Watje and LaRae Wood; *Ministers:* The Congregation; *Pastor:* Rev. Robert D. Bartlett

### Prayer concerns:

❖ Members who are daily battling chronic conditions ❖ Members who are facing and recovering from surgery ❖ Members who are undergoing cancer treatments ❖ The Round Lake Community with changes occurring in rural areas ❖ Veterans and their families ❖ The Round Lake Senior Citizens Center and our Golden Agers ❖ Recent High School and College Graduates ❖ Young people and their parents as summer school vacations begin ❖ Vacation Bible School Planning ❖

Our sister congregation, The First Presbyterian Church of Brewster ❖ The present and the future of our Presbytery and the PC(U.S.A.) ❖ Victims of natural disaster, violence and terrorism



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Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys

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Willmar MN 56201

320-235-7910

[minnesotavalleys.org](http://minnesotavalleys.org)

Monday-Friday:  
8:00-4:30

We're on Facebook, too!

## THE WORD FROM RICK: “UPON FURTHER REVIEW”



Upon further review, last Tuesday’s meeting of the presbytery, was more of what I would hope that our presbytery gatherings could be about – a minimum amount of business, and a significant amount of worship, fellowship, and enriching the saints of the presbytery.

I know that it is important for us as a presbytery to transact the business that has been entrusted to us as a council of the church, and we need to fulfill that responsibility, but I believe that the experience of a presbytery gathering can be so much more.

The Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys is a “community of faith communities” – fifty-eight of us – spread across west-central and southwestern Minnesota. We talk a great deal about relationships, about supporting one another, and about creating partnerships in ministry ... and because distance is a significant concern for many of us, the relatively few times that we gather as the community must be more than just doing business. It must be about creating experiences that will nurture relationships between individuals and congregations. It must be about sharing the learnings that our experiences teach us and telling stories that help us understand who we are and what God is doing in us, through us, and even in spite of us. For me, a great deal of what took place last Tuesday had the potential to do just that!

Last Tuesday, as we worshipped, we commissioned one of our own – Mindy Vande Brake – to service as a Young Adult Volunteer in mission to New Orleans. What an opportunity this creates for us – as individuals and congregations – to develop a personal relationship with a young adult who is giving a year of service that will not only have an impact on those she serves, but on her as well. During worship, we heard Doug Dent speak of a personal and congregational investment in “hands on” mission and received encouragement from Doug to do likewise, and followed that encouragement with a recommitment to our baptismal commitment.

Last Tuesday, we also had the opportunity to learn three mission opportunities that are receiving significant investments from individuals, our congregations, and this presbytery. Blake Collins, Ed Morgan, and the Occidente Partnership Task Force shared mission stories that brought us in closer touch with ministries that are changing lives and transforming communities in Pakistan, Guatemala, and other corners of this country and the world. There was a great deal of encouragement for Presbyterians in Minnesota Valleys to share in these ministries, or create new partnerships and involvements that might extend Christ’s mission.

## THE WORD FROM RICK, CONTINUED

Following lunch, a significant number of our congregations shared their mission stories through a mission fair that highlighted what our congregations are doing individually and through partnerships with others to reach out to their communities and God's world. The Book of Order says that the "congregation is the church engaged in the mission of God in its particular context (community/neighborhood/region)," and that was made very clear to those gathered as they learned firsthand about the mission that is happening within and beyond the walls of our congregations. Every congregation has a responsibility to be a "mission center" and it is exciting to see our congregations reaching out.



The day concluded with members of our community sharing joys and concerns ... and before we left, Al Jergenson prayed for those joys and concerns, individuals who are near and dear to us, our congregations, and for each one of us. Yes, we did some business – there will always be business for us to do – but for me that took a back seat to what I saw and experienced in worship, in the small groups, around the lunch tables, and in the corridors and rooms of First Presbyterian Church of St. Cloud. We shared stories, passions for mission, a commitment to our faith, and along the way, a few laughs ... and that is what becoming community is all about!

Have a blessed week . . .

Grace and Peace,

*Rick*

**P.S.** – There is another ministry outreach endeavor taking place within our presbytery's bounds and also extending across state and presbytery lines into South Dakota. Owar Ojulu, a candidate for ministry under the care of our presbytery is directing Hope Christian Ministry, an outreach to families and children of the Anuak communities of Worthington and Sioux Falls.

This ministry has received support and encouragement from Westminster Presbyterian Church in Worthington, the presbytery, and the "1001 New Worshipping Communities" program of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Recently, we received a report from Owar about what this ministry is doing, and as an extension of last Tuesday's presbytery meeting, I want to keep us telling stories . . . so here is one more!

## HOPE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY: A BRIEF SUMMARY ON YOUTH LANGUAGE CLASS AND SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM

By Owar Ojulu



**Overview:** As it has been identified in our application, this program has an initiative to help the families and Children of the Anuak community in Worthington, Minnesota, and Sioux Falls, South Dakota. This small refugee community endures many challenges in their new home—the United States of America. The challenges of the new culture is causing and affecting family life.

Misunderstanding between parents and children due to language barriers become the high-flying problem of everyday life of parents in this community. As a result, parents have limited chance to be with their children, teach them their own native language, help them with homework, and tell them those stories of their



African culture. So, it become apparent that due to language barriers most children do not listen to their parents and develop bad habits. Many quit attending church services, don't attend schools or score low grades in their classes.



Therefore, Hope Christian Fellowship has engaged in a new worshipping community to encourage and strengthen the faith of one another. It's also to help our children know where they belong, grow in faith and learn the Anuak language. The support of our local church, the presbytery and the 1001 New Worshipping Communities has motivated the group to strive for a better future in this ministry.



In this regard, we were able to conduct language classes and managed to do lots of youth actives. We have organized two spiritual conferences over the summer where members of the Anuak community came together from cities in Minnesota and South Dakota. "Home based Bible study" was our bigger part in conducting this program. Even if about half of the community members have church membership, a handful of them are not members of any church. We meet for the Bible study program by going from one apartment to

## HOPE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY, CONTINUED

another every Sunday evening. Everyone is motivated and interested—their hospitality is unspeakable. Making multiple trips to Sioux Falls, SD (63 miles) for similar purposes has been our commitment throughout the six months, and we plan to do more if chances are available.

**Our children are enthusiastic for Christ!** Even if challenges were inevitable, we had a successful program. Children are actively motivated and are eager to learn new words and practice the language. Outdoor activities and community engagements have attracted children to get involved. We have about 13 children on average for program, ages from 9-15 yrs. old and about 8-10 adults during Bible studies. Youth group meets twice a week, Tuesday and Thursday after school. The Adult Program meets on Monday and Sunday evenings. As a result, our children are now confident to speak and read the Anuak language. They are able to share their stories, and read scriptures. This has taken the “New Worshiping Community” path with a long-term goal. There has been a big turnout and surprising interest in learning Anuak. There is good news to share and celebrate this season. At homes, adults come for a Bible study and also read the verses using the Anuak letters testing their knowledge.

**Challenges:** There is larger, but unchurched Anuak community in Sioux Falls, SD. Even if many attempts have been made to find a home for this group, none has been found. We never gave up! We are still knocking on doors and hopefully, we’ll find a place soon. Second, differences among the community members has limited us to succeed. Much time was spent on reconciliation to get as many members on board as possible. Third, my health issue (hernia) that began in August, has contributed to the challenges. Many contributions have been made, both in kind but little monetary support, that were used toward spiritual conferences.

**Future Hope:** Our team is optimistic about the difference that this program brings to this community. Both parents and children ask for the continuation of the Hope Program. The Anuak class has been seen not just as a class but as a time to get our kids together where they could know themselves well and learn about their culture. It was also a time for change and adopts to a good behavior. We believe that the Bible study program will be stronger and grow into a worship setting in the following months. Community members will continue supporting this ministry both in kind offering and tithes.

**THANK YOU—**Our thanks and gratitude goes to:

- 1001 New Worshiping Communities for giving this opportunity and gracious gift to support our language and Bible study programs
- Westminster Presbyterian Church of Worthington for kind offer of the space for our youth group
- The Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys for helping us in many ways to continue doing this ministry

## WE GET MAIL: A NOTE FROM BLAKE COLLINS

Last Tuesday, Blake Collins, Funds Development Specialist for the Young Adult Volunteer program of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, was present with us. Blake came to participate in our “mission focus,” introducing the Young Adult Volunteer program during the small group session, as participating in the commissioning of Mindy Vande Brake to her year of service. On Monday, we received a note from Blake, and while it was addressed specifically to our presbytery leaders and staff, it is a message that we wanted to share with you all.

*Revs. Rick, Candace, and Pam, Ms. Virginia, Ms. Carol, and Ms. Karen,*

*Thank you all so much for the time and care put into the planning of the Minnesota Valleys Presbytery meeting. Thank you also for the hospitality and inviting me to come worship, pray, and share with you all.*

*Blessings on all your works and ministries. I look forward to continuing our partnership in Christ through the Y.A.V. program. We are called to be workers for peace, and so it is extra encouraging to see all the works you support. Thank you for your support of a program feeding our denomination and wider church. God Bless!*

*Blake A. Collins (Peru Y.A.V. 2013-2014)*

## SESSION RECORD REVIEWS

It's annual sessions records review time. As you know, the Book of Order states that each session will keep a full and accurate record of its proceedings which shall be submitted at least once each year to the presbytery for its general review (G-3.0108). The Session Record reviews this year are as follows:

Wednesday, May 27 at 6:30 p.m. at the Osakis church

Contact person: Lynne Ostersaas ° 320-251-6667 ° [slynn3@cloudnet.com](mailto:slynn3@cloudnet.com)

Wednesday, June 10 at 6:30 p.m. at the Lake Crystal church

Contact person: Randy Lubbers ° 507-317-9814 ° [lubbers85@gmail.com](mailto:lubbers85@gmail.com)

Wednesday, July 1 at 6:30 p.m. at the Redwood Falls church

Contact person: Patricia Rosa ° 507-336-2433 ° [ripafarm@hotmail.com](mailto:ripafarm@hotmail.com)

Wednesday, July 8 at 6:30 p.m. at the Iona church

Contact person: Jim Krapf ° 507-350-1662 ° [jwkrampf@knology.net](mailto:jwkrampf@knology.net)

You can choose the most convenient time for you; snacks will be provided. Each church is responsible to get its books and a peer reviewer (generally the Clerk of Session) to this meeting. If the Clerk or moderator cannot attend you may send someone else from your church to be a peer reviewer. If someone from your church cannot attend at all; you **must** contact the Session Records Committee Chair Randy Lubbers at 507-317-9814 or Stated Clerk Pam Prouty at 507-627-5486.

## PW IN MINNESOTA VALLEYS SPRING GATHERING

First Presbyterian Church, 302 E. Prince St, Lake Crystal, MN  
Tuesday, June 2—Coffee begins at 8:00, Meeting at 9:30

Come to the annual Spring Gathering of Presbyterian Women in Minnesota Valleys. Our featured speaker is Julie Hawker, who will talk about her work with the immigrant community in Mankato. We'll also have the business meeting of PW with election of officers, learn more about the Horizons Bible *Study Come to the Waters*, dedicate the Birthday Offering, network with our sisters in PW, shop with SERRV, and have an all-around good day.

Remember that registrations for Churchwide Gathering are still open. If you have not registered yet, the “how tos” will be discussed at the Spring Gathering. For those who will not be going to the Churchwide Gathering in Minneapolis, June 18-21, but who would like to participate in that event, you may bring one or more \$10 Target Gift cards to our Spring Gathering. These will be collected at the Churchwide Gathering and donated to the American Indian Family Center in St. Paul.

The PW Coordinating Team thanks the PW of Lake Crystal for hosting the event, serving morning coffee and serving the catered lunch, and the Cambria PW for serving the afternoon coffee.



**PRESBYTERIAN  
WOMEN**



To register for the PW Minnesota Valleys Spring Gathering, contact Janice Frederickson of Lake Crystal PW, letting her know which church you represent, and how many women will be coming.

By mail: PO Box 218, Lake Crystal, MN 56055

By phone: 507-726-2791

By e-mail: [janicefuzzy@gmail.com](mailto:janicefuzzy@gmail.com)

HURRY: Registration closes on Tuesday, May 26!

## CHURCH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT XII

By Stan Menning

Way back in January, I attended a workshop on Evangelism at Lakeshore Center at Okoboji. It was led by Rev. Robert Houser. Bob is a retired pastor and Presbytery Executive, most recently the EP at Central Nebraska Presbytery. Our conversation for the day included the different phases of evangelism, activating and assimilating new members, hospitality and inactive members. This will be the final article in a series about assimilating new members. We will look at twelve questions to ask in developing a plan to assimilate new members.

### ASSIMILATION PLAN

1. What does God expect from members of your church?
2. What do we expect of our members right now?
3. What kind of people already comprises our congregation?
4. How will that change in the next 5 - 10 years?
5. What do our members value?
6. What are the greatest needs of our new members?
7. What are the greatest needs of our long term members?
8. How can we make membership more meaningful?
9. How can we insure our members feel loved and cared for?
10. What do we owe our members?
11. What resources or services could we offer our members?
12. How do we take what we do well and make it better?

While this was listed as an assimilation plan in the program, I see it as a good tool to use to evaluate any churches ministry. I would encourage sessions to use this to evaluate where you are at in your ministry and how you can improve, even if you do not have new members.



# MISSION TRIP TO CHARLESTON, WV

Organized by the Cluster 2 Presbyterian Churches

July 24<sup>th</sup> - August 1<sup>st</sup>

Cost: \$288 per youth.

This includes mission trip and travel food money, but does not include spending money. \*Price also includes the deduction of the cluster paying 20% of youth's fees. Fundraising options are available, please contact Katie J. Vande Brake.

Ages: **Those currently in 6<sup>th</sup> grade to seniors.**

We will spend the week from Sunday, July 26-Friday, July 31<sup>st</sup> at Charleston, WV Youth Works site. Please see the Charleston information sheet.

Travel Time is from July 24<sup>th</sup> to July 26<sup>th</sup> and July 31<sup>st</sup> to Aug 1<sup>st</sup>. One way there or back, I am planning on us to be staying at a local church and tour the local sites in Chicago. On the other way, I am working on to stay with a local church and spend time at their urban national park, going to museums and seeing a movie on the lawn in Indianapolis. Small added fees might be added for museum admittance. Travel dates and times may change as transportation gets ironed out.

We are looking for three more youth and one chaperone. Also, we are looking for the use of mini vans or larger vans. We already have short-term auto insurance that will cover us during the trip.

Contact Information:

**Katie J. Vande Brake**

Mission Trip Director

[vandebrakekt@gmail.com](mailto:vandebrakekt@gmail.com)

(320) 260-6707



## CALENDAR

Thursday, May 19: Budget & Finance Committee meets at the presbytery office from 10:00–2:00

Friday, May 22 and Monday, May 25: Office closed

Tuesday, May 26: Pam in the office

Wednesday, May 27: 6:30 p.m. Records Review at First Presbyterian Church of Osakis



## JOHN 15:26-27; 16:4B-15

‘When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.

*The Work of the Spirit*

‘I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, “Where are you going?” But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgement: about sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; about judgement, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.

‘I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

