

# THE VALLEY BRIDGE



July 14, 2015

## JULY 19: 8TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST 16TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

2 Samuel 7:1-14a; Psalm 89:20-37; Ephesians 2:11-22; Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

*Smaller Membership Church*

### **Fellowship of Prayer: First Presbyterian Church of Saint Cloud**

Marsha Ziebarth, Administrative Assistant/Financial Secretary

Mark Giese, Youth & Campus Ministry

Scott Varner, Facilities Manager

Jeanne Duininck, Christian's Ministry Coordinator

Punky Jenderseck, Custodial staff

Ann Oleksowicz, Organist

Nancy Parker, Choir Director

Lori Potter, Bell Choir Director

Rev. Elizabeth Tot, Sudanese Pastor

Darin Seaman, Pastor

### Prayers for:

- Mission in St. Cloud area.
- Homeless ministry of the St. Cloud school district.
- Evangelistic outreach to our community.
- For Christ to be glorified in our church and community.



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MN Valleys Presbytery  
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320-235-7910  
[minnesotavalleys.org](http://minnesotavalleys.org)

Monday-Friday:  
8:00-4:30

We're on Facebook,  
too!

## THE WORD FROM RICK: “READING THE NEWS”



Once a month, a big file folder of special papers appears in the top tray on the corner of my desk. The special papers in this folder are the monthly publications that come from most of our fifty-seven congregations ~ your church newsletters. These epistles from the valleys and the prairies keep us informed about life in your congregations; they provide us with insights and information that help us feel connected into your world.

I admit that I don't necessarily read every word, but I do find much that interests me ~ the words from your pastors, the stories about your engagement in mission and outreach, the news about what your youth are up to, the reports from your session meetings, and yes, I even look at the monthly financial reports. I love to see the pictures of your people engaged in ministry, the occasional recipes, and the corny jokes. When I am done, I feel a little bit more in the loop - connected to you.

Some of the highlights of this month's reading included some good summer stuff, as well as words from congregations that don't appear to be taking it slower this summer:

- Reports from congregations that are being served by Clearwater Forest's "Camp in a Van" and the excitement that these visits have brought to several congregations.
- News about the numbers of young people that headed from our churches to both Clearwater and Okoboji. Camp scholarship funds are being well used!
- Stories about youth mission experiences that have happened, are happening, and will happen. The youth of our presbytery are serving in places like Nederland (CO), Sioux Falls, Nashville, Charleston (WV), Leech Lake (MN), and at Bdecan Church on the reservation in North Dakota ... among others. Our young people are stepping out, making connections, putting actions along with their beliefs, and learning about the faith and experiences of others, as well as themselves.
- And, the sharing of updates from churches, some that are involved in New Beginnings and others that have been engaged in other explorations, and the discoveries that are beginning to emerge from that work. We have some pretty amazing things beginning to take shape around us!

I found it particularly enlightening to read the pastor's comments from the newsletters of those congregations where some new things are beginning to take shape. Using slightly different words and illustrations, Galen Smith, Mark Ford, and Candace Adams each addressed the concept of "Missional Church" and how that is fueling their congregations' needs to discern how it is that they are being called to do church in a different way.

## THE WORD FROM RICK, CONT'D

We know that the “attractional model” of “if you build it, they will come” no longer works like it once did. The focus on “getting people through the front door and into the pews” is not what the church is all about. The “missional” church is about a church that “sends people out of the front door and into the world.” To that end, I was excited about Galen and Mark challenging their congregations to consider what that might mean in their communities, as well as the vision of Hope Church in Spicer, where the church leadership has studied the “Great Ends of the Church,” and is now prepared to do something about it.

The folks at Hope have chosen to embark on an initiative. They have a plan to reach out to the “Unchurched” and the “Dechurched” – the “Nones” and the “Dones.” Their goal is not to fill the pews, but to transform lives in the communities that make up their extended neighborhood. It is what Jesus told the disciples to do Matthew 28, and what the missional church is all about. The instructions didn’t say anything about filling the pews; it was about going out to transform lives.

Reading your newsletters and talking with your pastors and leaders tells me that there is some seriously significant stuff going on in our congregations. I am seeing more of our congregations reaching beyond their walls wanting to transform lives around them. I look forward to more exciting reading and storytelling, as more of our congregations discern and engage in the new things that God is calling them to do! There is lots to do!

Grace and Peace,

*Rick*

## A SPECIAL PRAYER REQUEST

One more nugget from the newsletters . . .

A little over a year ago, our congregations in Edgerton and Lismore welcomed Tom Voigt into their lives as their Student Pastor, and a special journey began. Coming from the North American Baptist family, Tom needed to learn about our Presbyterian way of life – polity, worship and sacraments, Reformed theology ... all the fun stuff – so that he could seek ordination in the PCUSA.

Well, Tom has motored through his coursework and the folks in Edgerton celebrated with a potluck, but that’s not the big news – Tom is ready for the next step in the process – Ordination Exams! Checking in with Tom this week, he has asked for a few extra prayers and I asked if I could share his request with the presbytery ... he said “absolutely.”

So, saints of Minnesota Valley, during the week of July 23-30, please send up special prayers for Tom Voigt as he takes his “Ords.” I know they will be appreciated!! -RCC

START PLANNING NOW: THE 2016 PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH TRIENNIUM



The Presbyterian Youth Triennium is a gathering for high school age youth from the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church that occurs every three years. **The 2016 event is July 19-23, 2016** at Purdue University. The theme for the 2016 event is “GO.”

*...into the world  
and make disciples*

Our presbytery is planning to be well represented in Indiana next summer, and we encourage the youth of our congregations to start planning now. Pam Prouty has agreed to serve as our Presbytery Registrar for this event; and by September 1, we hope to announce the members of our “Go’ Team,” those people who will organize and lead our participants.

Stay tuned for more details, and in the meantime, check out the 2016 video “teaser” at: <http://presbyterianyouthtriennium.org/>

222<sup>ND</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMISSIONERS, ALTERNATES, AND YAADS FROM THE COMMITTEE ON REPRESENTATION AND NOMINATIONS:

The 222<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly will meet June 18-25, 2016 in Portland, Oregon. On October 31, The Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys will elect two commissioners (one Teaching Elder and one Ruling Elder), along with two alternate commissioners, and a Young Adult Advisory Delegate from this presbytery to participate in the Assembly.



During a recent meeting, the Committee on Representation and Nominations approved an updated process for making the nominations of our participants, along with the application forms that need to be used by those seeking the committee’s and the presbytery’s consideration.

This week, all session moderators and clerks of session will receive an e-mail containing this information. The new, updated information will then be posted on the presbytery website. Applications need to be received by September 1 (please note that last week’s announcement had an incorrect date posted).

## CAMP SCHOLARSHIP MONEY!

Congregational Resources and Development Committee has \$75 scholarships per camper to attend Presbyterian Clearwater Forest or Presbyterian Camp on Okoboji summer camp programs. If your church has already applied for scholarships and you have more campers going, please apply for more! Here is the link on our website: [Scholarship Form](#).

## KEEPING CLEARWATER FOREST SUMMER CAMP STAFF IN OUR PRAYERS

The summer program at Clearwater Forest is now in full swing. During staff training a few weeks ago, I told the staff team that they were engaged in a unique ministry that had the power to transform lives for Christ in ways that they could not imagine. I reminded them that this was more than another summer job, but rather that this was a call to serve God's people in a special way. On that day, I told the staff that they were not alone in this venture, but that they would have people in our churches supporting them with prayer. I made a promise to the staff that you would pray for them every week, every day of the camp season.

Through the end of the summer, you will see names of the Clearwater Forest Summer Camp staff in the Valley Bridge. Please remember to keep these young people in your prayers as they serve, in Christ's name, every person whose lives they encounter in this ministry.

Thank you for your prayers,

RICK

Clearwater: Week of July 12

Jessi Nelson - Grands Camp Director - South St. Paul, MN

Katharine Henry - Counselor - Edina, MN

Emma Wasko - Counselor - Richfield, MN

Scott and Leanne Thompson - This week's Volunteer Chaplains - Willmar, MN

## FPC MADELIA SEEKS GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Mission Redevelopment Committee of First Presbyterian Church, Madelia is seeking applications to receive grants. Qualifying projects may include (1) Development, formation, or redevelopment of Presbyterian churches; (2) Evangelism or recruitment of new members; (3) New building construction; (4) Renovations or capital improvements; (5) Presbyterian-sponsored mission projects

A written letter of application should be submitted to the Mission Redevelopment Committee by September 1, 2015.

Mission Redevelopment Committee, PO Box 156, Madelia, MN 56062

[1stpres@cccinternet.net](mailto:1stpres@cccinternet.net)

## SESSION RECORDS CELEBRATIONS

*Submitted by Pam Prouty*

We have had great success with our Session Records Review this summer. First of all the Session Records Committee wants to thank the host churches: Osakis, Redwood Falls, Lake Crystal and Iona. This year we had the clerks share something they want to celebrate about their particular congregation with the Presbytery; I already shared the items from cluster 1 and 2. Following are the rest:

Edgerton: We are on a journey with Thomas Voigt; he will have his ordination transferred from the Baptist denomination to the PCUSA next year.

Iona: We celebrated our church's centennial on June 14th, 2015. Rick Carus was here to celebrate with us.

Beaver Creek: We are planning a 50 year celebration of our church building.

Emmanuel, Rushmore: We conducted a Vacation Bible School for the first time in many years.

Ellsworth: We are celebrating our new pastor, Paul Snyder.

Mountain Lake: We are having on Sunday, July 14 a joint worship service and picnic with the Windom and St. James churches in Lawcon Park. All three pastors are involved, and we will have a Praise Band.

Slayton: Feed My Lambs mission project, celebration for our new audio equipment and a new church sign

Worthington: Enjoying our new pastor and participating in the New Beginnings program.

Ebenezer, Renville: Camp in a Van for our Vacation Bible School

Dawson: Dimes for Dinner

Redwood Falls: We are excited about the ideas which have come from New Beginnings groups; the strength of all the young families, and the unexpected donation from a donor outside of the church for our kitchen remodeling project.

## SESSION RECORDS CELEBRATIONS, CONTINUED

Marshall: Fishes and Loaves is now serving meals four evenings a week to anyone in the community who would like a meal and fellowship. Our new pastor who was called in January 2015, the congregation is excited to welcome Anne Veldhuizen!

Windom: New Beginnings

Kasota: Our pastor search committee is working diligently to find a new pastor. We held a Father's Day Picnic on Father's Day, great time, fun, food and fellowship. It truly shows we are a big family. The first Saturday in November is the 42<sup>nd</sup> year of our Church Bazaar. Our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper in 2015 will be the 65<sup>th</sup> year.

Canby: Our Christian Education/Outreach committee sponsored music concerts, a \$500 grant from the Madelia church "jump started" a new Mission Committee, hosting the Presbytery meeting on August 4.

Harrison, Spicer: We are working on a history book for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary coming up.

Willmar: Family Promise, quilts, Reunion Picnic on August 9 and the Furthest Pew Program

Maynard: Having an indoor picnic on July 19 after worship service.

Blue Earth: We collected the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Pocket Change Offering on May 31; donations came to \$200 and with \$100 from the local mission fund we were able to provide four scholarship enabling inner city youth from Minneapolis to attend Prairie River Camp this summer.

Cambria: Easter Breakfast, Blind Auction Fundraiser, Bell Ringing by youth (young and old)

Federated, Fergus Falls: Timothy Project, Food Drop and Box of Blessing

Wilmont: Our annual horse drawn carriage Christmas caroling event

Lismore: Caroling Christmas Service at Arnold memorial

Litchfield: Wings

## STORM HITS GHOST RANCH

## GHOST RANCH



Dear Friends,

Many of you may have seen on the news that Ghost Ranch was hit by a devastating storm. We give thanks that everyone (staff and guests) are accounted for and safe. But the damage to property was extensive and Ghost Ranch lost Pot Hollow, Short House, Pole

Barn, the Low Ropes Course and equipment shed, and the brand new Fiber Arts Studio. PCUSA did a [news story that you can read here](#). Prayers for the staff and guests who experienced this trauma are greatly appreciated.

Because Ghost Ranch had a \$100,000 deductible on its flood insurance policy, in addition to prayers, all gifts are welcome. You can visit the Ghost Ranch website to make an [online gift](#). Our presbytery has a special relationship with Ghost Ranch and I hope that many of us can give generously.



## STORM NEWS FROM PRESBYTERIAN CLEARWATER FOREST

Just a quick note to let you all know that we had absolutely NO damage during last night's storms. You may have heard Brainerd/Niswaga area were hit hard with strong winds/hail/thunderstorms and trees were downed and widespread power outages...

**BUT WE ARE FINE AND RUNNING AS PLANNED!**

I personally found literally one branch on the playfield by Eagle down. We had rain, thunder/lighting but no damage.

Program is going on as planned, and we look forward to seeing you (*camper picker uppers*) Saturday morning at 9:30! Please keep those that were affected including the camp that was closed in your prayers.

In Christ,

Rich Swartwood





## BOARD OF PENSIONS SEEKS ADDITIONAL HEALTH CARE ENROLLEES

By Gloria Vande Brake

As I mentioned last week, I was excited to attend the Board of Pensions (BOP) Central Regional Benefits Consultation on May 6-7 in Chicago on behalf of the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry.

The purpose of the consultation was to seek input on how Board of Pensions can strengthen its ministry, and possibly expand the number of enrollees.

50% of Presbyterian Church (USA) churches have 100 members or less. 75% of employers only pay for 1 member: their teaching elder. There are only 3700 non-teaching elders in the plan compared to 40,000-60,000 people receiving W2s from PC (USA) churches. 60% of these lay employees receive health care elsewhere.

BOP's medical coverage is self-funded, totally separate from retirement. The average age of the teaching elder members in the BOP Plan is 52 with 17.5 yrs. of service. 1% of population accounts for 30% of the medical costs with 50% of cost in cancer, musculoskeletal (back & neck) issues, and heart disease. Less than 1% of prescription drugs accounts for 33% of drug costs. If BOP does nothing to expand their membership, their reserve on the medical care will be reduced from \$50 million down to \$18.5 million in 2017.

BOP would like to serve more of the church workers by expanding coverage, unbundling benefits and offering more menu-based options. Churches would not be required to contribute for their non-teaching elders in the plan. If you have any suggestions, please feel free to contact the Board of Pensions.

The Board plans to continue to emphasize Health and Wellness programs as its member's age.

Over 1200 members were helped in 2014 under the BOP Assistance Program. They received almost \$5.3 million in income/housing grants, adoption, emergencies, and transition to college, seminary debt, CREDO (week-long conference on health, spirituality, education) and sabbatical support. These funds come from gifts and one-half of the Christmas Joy Offering. None of these grant funds come from dues.

Vacancy dues from churches seeking a teaching elder subsidize BOP's Medicare Supplement Fund, benefitting retirees and survivors

Seminary students receive health benefits at half the cost, which is paid by the other members for just a few cents extra/month.

*Come to the Waters!*

WOMEN'S SPIRITUAL RETREAT

BIBLE STUDY, WORSHIP, FRIENDSHIP, FOOD, LAUGHTER, AND LOVE!

*Get away from the busy-ness of life as you relax with friends, share stories, and spend time with God.*

*Focusing on the Psalms, we will be encouraged by God's love and faithfulness.*

**When?** Monday and Tuesday, September 28-29, 2015

Registration-12:30-1:15 PM--Monday

Opening session—1:30 PM—Monday

Closing Worship—11 AM—Tuesday

*(Noon meal following worship)*

**Where?** Green Lake Bible Camp, Spicer, MN

Cost: Including Meals (3) and Lodging—\$75.00 or 1 day \$40.00

Program leader: Rev. Elaine Boyd

This retreat is sponsored by the Presbyterian Women of Minnesota Valleys Presbytery, but **every Presbyterian (or non-Presbyterian) woman is invited to this event.**

Please fill out and send the registration form below to Darlene before September 7<sup>th</sup>.

Feel free to copy this form as many times as necessary.

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Darlene O'Neil  
32505 300<sup>th</sup> St  
Worthington, MN 56187

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address if available \_\_\_\_\_

Fee enclosed: Full event \$ \_\_\_\_\_ One day \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Special Needs \_\_\_\_\_

NEWS FROM AROUND THE CHURCH: INTERNAL EXECUTIVES SELECTED AS TEMPORARY TEAM TO MANAGE THE PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY (FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN NEWS SERVICE)

LOUISVILLE (PNS) THE PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HAS APPOINTED TWO CURRENT MEMBERS OF LEADERSHIP TO CO-MANAGE THE PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY (PMA) UNTIL AN INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IS IDENTIFIED.

Earline Williams has been the deputy executive director of Shared Services and chief financial officer for the Mission Agency since July 2013 and is a ruling elder in PC(USA). Prior to joining the national staff, Williams had worked for more than 30 years in the finance, government, non-profit and business sectors as an executive.



Earline Williams      Barry Creech

Barry Creech is currently the director of policy, administration and board support and has served on the national staff in various leadership roles in the Executive Director’s Office and Communications since 1989.

“The Executive Committee is very pleased that Earline and Barry are willing to serve together as temporary co-managers,” said Marilyn Gamm, chair of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. “They not only bring a breadth and depth of Mission Agency management experience but are also dedicated servants of the church who are liked and respected by staff.”

Linda Valentine resigned her position as executive director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency on June 16, 2015 after determining that God was calling her to conclude this season of leadership. Her last day was July 10, 2015.

Williams and Creech assume their new roles effective immediately and will serve for the coming months until an interim executive director is identified.

“We offer our thanks and appreciation for the Mission Agency staff and the outstanding ways they inspire, equip and connect the church in its mission,” added Gamm. “They have continued to give of their time and talents as the church seeks to serve Christ’s mission in the world.”

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board has sought recommendations from across the church for the interim executive director role. This individual will be responsible for leading the Mission Agency until a permanent executive director is identified.

## CALENDAR

Tuesday, July 14: 10:00 a.m. Congregational Resources and Development conference call

Friday, July 17: Deadline for documents to be included in the presbytery packet

Friday, July 17–Monday, July 20: Virginia out of the office

Sunday, July 19: Rick preaches at Ashford Presbyterian Church of Milroy

Tuesday, July 21: Presbytery packet is posted to website



## MARK 6:30-34, 53-56

The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, 'Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.' For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

**Healing the Sick in Gennesaret**

When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the market-places, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.