

# THE VALLEY BRIDGE



August 25, 2015

## AUGUST 30: 14TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST 22ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Song of Solomon 2:8-13; Psalm 45:1-2, 6-9; James 1:17-27; Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

### **Fellowship of Prayer: First Presbyterian Church of Willmar**

Rev. Leanne Thompson, *Co-Pastor*; Rev. Scott Thompson, *Co-Pastor*; Jill Boeyink, *CEYM Director/Music Team Director*; Sue Carus, *Music and Arts Director*; Marcia Overton, *Organist*; Meranda Lelonek, *Administrative Assistant*; Deb Lang, *Financial Secretary*; Bea Ourada, *Treasurer*; Jerry & Sue Schiro, *Custodians*; Terry Woitaszewski, *Winter Custodian*; Nicole Reich, *Nursery Supervisor*

### Prayer Requests:

- Family Promise of Kandiyohi County which opened this month and is housed in our building.
- Launch of Fall youth programs, including the 10 students who will begin Confirmation.
- For teachers and students returning to school.
- For the health and well-being of members recovering from illness and surgery.



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320-235-7910

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

## THE WORD FROM RICK: “MORE CHANGE”



Tuesday, I received an e-mail that once again reminded me about the change that is taking place at the top of our Presbyterian Church (USA).

Several weeks ago, on the heels of the termination of four senior staff persons in the Evangelism and Church Growth area of our denomination, we received word that Linda Valentine was stepping down from her role as the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. While this news came as a surprise to some, for many of us in the church, we felt that it was a decision that needed to be made for some time.

In the intervening weeks, transition staff has been put in place and the Executive Board of the PMA has begun to take the steps necessary to secure the executive leader or leaders that will be appropriate for this particular time in the life of our denomination.

Tuesday's news informed us that Gradye Parsons will not be standing for a third term as Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. Again, I suspect that, for many in the church, this news was not overly surprising and perhaps comes with a sense of relief. As a result of this most recent news, when the General Assembly convenes in Portland, Oregon next summer, our denomination will now not only confirm new executive leadership, but new ecclesiastical leadership, as well.

Groups of Presbyterians are currently engaged in searches to discern who it is that God is raising up to provide the kind of leadership that is needed to lead this denomination in to the future. As these groups go about their work in the months that will lead us to Portland, I would encourage all Presbyterians across this presbytery to be in prayer for those who are doing this discerning on behalf of the whole church. These will not be easy tasks!

I would also encourage us to be in prayer that God would lift up mature, Spirit-led/Spirit-filled individuals who have the gifts and the passion to serve Christ Church in these challenging times. The task for these new servants, whomever they might be, will be most significant.

I believe that God is not done with the PCUSA. God has not led this church on its long journey from the Reformation, and even before, without reason or purpose. I believe that in the midst of this time of significant and seemingly constant change, God remains faithful to those who have been called to be the church. I am confident that God will call forth appropriate leaders to work with all of us to lead the church into the future. This will be my prayer.

Grace and Peace,

*Rick*

## STATED CLERK ANNOUNCES DECISION NOT TO STAND FOR THIRD TERM

The church lives its life through the liturgical seasons. Those seasons remind us of the biblical story and prepare us to celebrate the gift of God's grace in Jesus Christ. In Advent we live in a season of expectations—the expectations of awaiting the promise of new life and a new way of living.

I firmly believe the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has entered into a new chapter of its common life. That chapter is full of much promise as we continue to follow God into the world. It also is my belief that this new chapter needs new leadership. I am therefore officially announcing that I will not stand for a third term as Stated Clerk.

It has been a great privilege for me to serve in the church in a variety of ministries. In every setting I have met wonderful people who are extraordinary witnesses for God. I have seen unselfish, faithful service from small children to mature saints. All of these images and stories I will carry with me always.

It has been a great honor to work with a talented staff—people giving of themselves because they strongly believe in their call to the work. It is a staff that is always striving to find ways to help, to encourage, and to listen to the wisdom of the greater church. We are blessed to have such servants.

Most of all I want to thank my wife Kathy. She has been an honest supporter and good listener. She has helped me to stay grounded. Her theological insights open my eyes daily to new visions of God.

The Lord has been good to me during these years. God has sent me friends to encourage and friends to challenge. The Holy Spirit has filled in for my many gaps. The gift of faithfulness in the life of Jesus Christ has inspired me to journey on the road with other disciples during this time of great change. I look forward to the future that God is calling the PC(USA) toward.

The Reverend Grady Parsons  
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

*Parsons was ordained in 1979 and served two congregations over 15 years. He also served as executive presbyter of the Presbytery of Holston for six and a half years. Parsons began working in the Office of the General Assembly in August 2000 and was elected Stated Clerk for his first term in 2008. A new Stated Clerk will be elected at the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), June 18–25, in Portland, Oregon. The work of the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee is underway, and the committee is currently seeking church-wide input.*

## RESOURCES

**NEW GRANTS ARE AVAILABLE** through the General Assembly to facilitate new ministries (not new worshipping communities ~ that is a separate program). Titled DREAM Grants (Developmental, Risky, Experimental, Adaptive Mission), these one-time grants of up to \$10,000 are available to provide assistance with start-up costs for new ministry initiatives. Applicants can be churches or mid-councils. In the remainder of 2015, there are two windows for applications, although the first is very soon. For the first window, **applications need to be at the synod office by November 15, 2015.**

Information has been sent to pastoral leaders in our congregations. For more information, please contact Rick Carus.

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMISSIONERS, ALTERNATES, AND YOUNG ADULTS ADVISORY DELEGATE APPLICATIONS ARE BEING SOUGHT

The 222<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly will meet June 18-25, 2016 in Portland, Oregon. At our stated meeting 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 to participate in the Assembly. The Committee on Representation and Nominations has approved a process for making the nominations of our participants.

Information and application forms are in the hands of every Clerk of Session, and are also available on the presbytery's web site. Individuals who wish to be considered for this service to the church are invited to submit an application to the Committee on Representation by September 15.

## SEPTEMBER ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

- 9/6/2008..... Christopher Drew
- 9/9/1995..... Pamela Prouty
- 9/18/1988..... Edward Godshall
- 9/21/1975..... Bob Bartlett
- 9/25/2011..... Karen Crawford
- 9/26/1962..... Roger Grussing
- 9/29/1985..... Donald Ottenhoff





## MINNESOTA VALLEY PRESBYTERY'S YOUNG ADULT VOLUNTEER (YAV): MINDY VANDE BRAKE

August 19

I have been recently commissioned by the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys to serve for a year-long mission service under the Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) program in New Orleans. I'm the first YAV from the 69 churches of our Presbytery to be commissioned in this program. I'll be mentoring high schools students at De La Salle High School as well as helping elementary & middle school students at an after school program called Mid City Ministries. I'll be journeying in faith and trusting God in new ways.

It was through my experiences as a youth director at First Presbyterian Church in Foley, as YAAD delegate to General Assemblies, on mission trips to the Middle East and Guatemala and with support from many pastors and elders in our Presbytery that led me to volunteer in this program. I've also been on the Bills & Overture Committee of our Presbytery and the Synod's Committee on Representation.

As a missionary, I feel called to share my faith and talents. I know that this experience will be life-changing and involve living outside my comfort zone and what is familiar to me. I would greatly appreciate your prayers, reading my blog ([mindyvb.wordpress.com](http://mindyvb.wordpress.com)) and sending care packages, since this will be the longest time I've been away from Minnesota. My new address from August 22, 2015-July, 2016 will be 4225 Franklin Ave, New Orleans, LA 70122

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. I would appreciate any prayer and support you can give.

Mindy Vande Brake  
[mindersvb@gmail.com](mailto:mindersvb@gmail.com)



## MOSAIC OF PEACE 2016: WITNESSING FOR PEACE AND WHOLENESS IN A LAND CALLED 'HOLY'

A PRESBYTERIAN PEACEMAKING CONFERENCE IN ISRAEL/PALESTINE

APRIL 4-16, 2016

Greetings from the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program!

*The PC(USA) has a longstanding commitment to peace in Israel and Palestine. We recognize the complexity of the issues, the decades-long struggle, the pain suffered and inflicted by policies and practices of both the Israeli government and Palestinian entities. We further acknowledge and confess our own complicity in both the historic and current suffering of Israelis and Palestinians yearning for justice and reconciliation. We encourage Presbyterians to travel to the Holy Land, and give broad support to the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim communities throughout the Middle East. (04-04 On Supporting Middle East Peacemaking, approved by the 221st General Assembly)*

The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program presents the **Mosaic of Peace 2016**, a 12-day peacemaking conference in April 2016 in which participants will *experience* this remarkable and troubled region, *encounter* its diverse people, *explore* its rich history and complex current situation, and *engage* with those who seek its peace.

Mosaic of Peace 2016 blends many of the highlights from the 2014 Mosaic of Peace conference with new experiences and new speakers, creating a meaningful journey for first-time and seasoned travelers to the Holy Land.

Applications are now being accepted—don't miss the October 15th deadline!

For more details: [www.pcusa.org/mosaicofpeace](http://www.pcusa.org/mosaicofpeace)

## WHY CHRISTIAN? CONFERENCE—GRAB A COUPLE OF TICKETS!

There are two tickets available for the sold out Why Christian? Conference in Minneapolis September 18, 19 (20th is optional). Keynote speakers are Rachel Held Evans and Nadia Bolz-Weber. Cost is \$105.44 per ticket. Link to more info about the conference: <http://www.whychristian.net/home/>

Contact:

Rita Dincau	Becky Armstrong
320-222-0745	320-262-5480
320-979-2492	320-262-1592

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**There is still time to register for our Fall classes!**

Looking for a way to jump start your ministry? These five-week classes are designed to inspire, engage and sustain your work in the church.

**“Shop Talk for Preachers”**

Dr. Robert Hoch, Associate Professor of Homiletics and Worship  
September 14 - October 18

Students of preaching, whether veterans in the pulpit or just starting out, will find this class inspiring and instructive. Participants will read Cornelius Plantinga’s *Reading for Preaching*, a work focused on understanding the relationship between literature, theology, and the preaching ministry. While we’re at it, we’ll dive into and talk about the theological and biblical themes that emerge in Wendell Berry’s modern classic, *Jayber Crow*. Finally, the instructor will share practical strategies for developing what he calls “our inner homiletician” - a set of skills that will assist participants as they develop long term practices for vocational growth. This is a great opportunity to enhance your preaching by interacting with other pastors and engaging in conversation with Dr. Hoch.

**“Exploring Vitality in Rural Congregations”**

Dr. Richard Shaffer, Associate Dean and Assistant Professor of Ministry  
October 19 - November 22

This course will explore the practices and programs that bring vitality and vision to rural congregations and their ministries. We will examine the practices of successful church leaders, share ideas about programs that have been successful, and suggest resources that may work in your ministry setting. This will be a five-week seminar that encourages input from ministry leaders and puts us face to face with others who have brought new life to the churches they serve. We will use our time together to share those ideas and help one another develop ministries that make a difference.

Register today! The cost for each class is only \$150. If this is your first online class with UDTTS you will also need to take our Orientation to Online Learning, for a one-time fee of only \$75.

To register contact Bridgett Boone: 563.589.3691 | E-mail: [BBoone@dbq.edu](mailto:BBoone@dbq.edu)

Richard J. Shaffer Jr., Associate Dean and Assistant Professor of Ministry  
Director of Distance Education  
University of Dubuque Theological Seminary  
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(563) 589-3691 [rschaffer@dbq.edu](mailto:rschaffer@dbq.edu) [ruralpastors.org](http://ruralpastors.org)

## LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION

The OPSF (Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation) Lifelong Learning Program Grant Application deadline is August 15th. (Previously, this was known as “Continuing Education Program Grant.”) HOWEVER, IF YOU NEED AN EXTENSION, PLEASE CONTACT US.



You may review the links below and either mail or email your completed application for 2016 Lifelong Learning Program Grants.

Would you help us remind those in your presbyteries that are considering or planning an event or workshop for 2016? Additionally, please forward this email to any volunteers who are assisting with planning events in 2016.

Thank you for your continued support of the church leaders, pastors and CREs in your area. Should you have questions or concerns, please contact Foundation staff.

Grace and Peace,

Dr. Gary S. Eller, President  
Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation

### **Lifelong Learning Links**

[Lifelong Learning Grant Guidelines](#)

[Lifelong Learning Grant Application](#)

[Lifelong Learning Payment Request](#)

Don't forget to save forms to your computer before filling them out.

The forms/guidelines are also posted online at:

[OPSF Lifelong Learning Website Page](#)



*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

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.

\*\*\*\*\*

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 \_\_\_\_\_



## CALENDAR

Wednesday, August 26: Personnel Committee meets at the presbytery office beginning at 10:00 a.m.

Friday, August 28: Virginia out of the office

Sunday, August 30: Rick preaches at First Presbyterian Church of Rushmore

## MARK 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

### The Tradition of the Elders

Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, 'Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?' He said to them, 'Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, "This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines." You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.'

Then he called the crowd again and said to them, 'Listen to me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.' For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.'

