

# THE VALLEY BRIDGE



September 1, 2015

SEPT 6: 15TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23; Psalm 125;  
James 2:1-10 (11-13) 14-17; Mark 7:24-37

*Season of Peace begins; Christian Vocation*

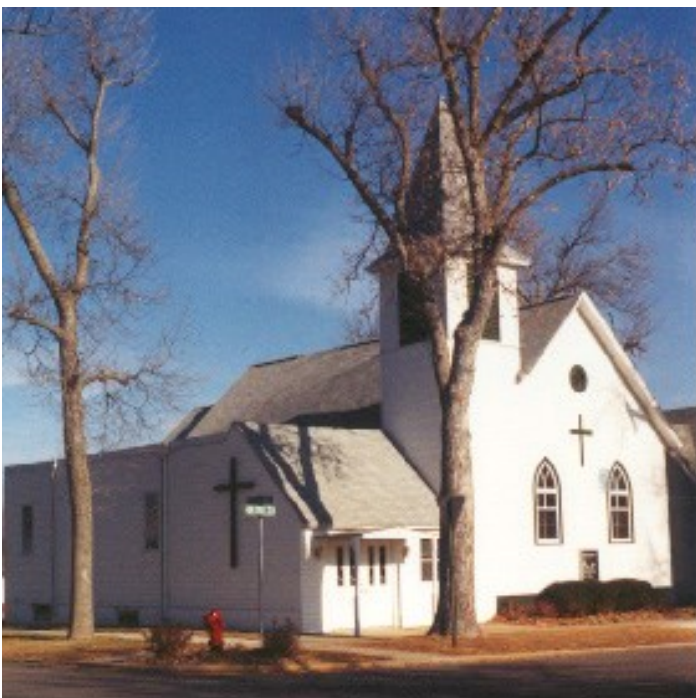
**Fellowship of Prayer: First Presbyterian Church of Wilmont**

Pastor: Keith Gallagher

Elders: Daryl Boots, Joel Joens (treasurer), Linda Reasonover,  
Frenchie Reasonover

Clerk of Session: Candace Joens

Prayer concerns include the hope that the ministry of the First Presbyterian Church of Wilmont will be dispersed and shared with other congregations as we move into the next step of our Christian lives.



## IN THIS ISSUE:

*Page 2-3: The Word from Rick*

*Pages 3: Evangelism Sunday*

*Page 4: Dream Grants; GA Commissioners, Alternate and YAAD Applications Sought*

*Page 5: Thank You from Presbyterian World Mission*

*Page 6: Mosaic of Peace 2016; Why Christian? Conference tickets available*

*Page 7: Leading Long, Leading Well Workshops in Jamestown*

*Page 8: Curriculum Resources*

*Page 9: Women's Retreat Registration*

*Page 10: Calendar; Gospel Reading*

*MN Valleys Presbytery*

*4055 Abbott Drive*

*Willmar MN 56201*

*320-235-7910*

*minnesotavalleys.org*

*Monday-Friday:*

*8:00-4:30*

*We're on Facebook, too!*

## THE WORD FROM RICK: “CARING FOR CREATION!” WORLD DAY OF PRAYER—SEPTEMBER 1, 2015



### A PRAYER FROM POPE FRANCIS

*All-powerful God, You are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled*

*with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.*

*We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace. Amen.*

*“Laudato Si’ (‘Praise Be to You’): On Care for Our Common Home,” 2015 Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis.*

All of the congregations here in Minnesota Valleys and across the denomination have been invited by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Environmental Ministries to join with our ecumenical partners around the world to recognize and support, today, September 1, 2015, and all subsequent September firsts, as a World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation.

Recently, Pope Francis proclaimed September 1st as the “World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation,” joining with Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I of Constantinople, who earlier extended an invitation for Christians to offer together “every year on this date prayers and supplications to the Maker of all, both as thanksgiving for the great gift of creation and as petitions for its protection and salvation.”

Echoing the call of Pope Francis and Patriarch Dimitrios, the Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary, of the World Council of Churches, wrote: “Pope Francis’s ecumenical initiative reinforces the growing emphasis on prayer for the care of creation among all the churches. We welcome the opportunity to join our efforts with those of the Ecumenical Patriarch and now the Catholic Church, and through prayer to sharpen our awareness and commitment to God’s creation, ‘our common home,’ as Pope Francis has called it.”

## THE WORD FROM RICK, CONTINUED

On my recent vacation, I could not help being touched by the sheer awesomeness and beauty of creation, this “common home” that surrounds us. Sue and I were able to gaze upon all five of the Great Lakes – actually touching the waters of three of them, wind our way through the Adirondack, Catskill, and Green Mountains, stand in the presence of waterfalls of varying shapes and sizes, and experience fields, vineyards, orchards that were abundant with the fruit of the land. When seeing such wondrous sights, one cannot help but to pause and offer simple prayers of thanksgiving to the Creator who brought it to be. At the same time, one cannot help be concerned about what the future holds in store for these treasures, especially if our human family takes this gift too much for granted, and does not exercise the care that it deserves. The gift of Creation is both beautiful and fragile, and we must care for it, with our actions and with our prayers!

One of the first responsibilities that God gave Adam was to be a steward of creation. The fundamental mandate for that responsibility and for creation care is found in the second Creation story, Genesis 2:15, where God places Adam in the garden to “till it and keep it” (NRSV). A better translation from the Hebrew is “to serve it and to preserve it.” Earlier in Genesis ~ 1:26-28 ~ God blesses humankind with dominion over the earth. This acknowledgement that humanity is the most powerful species on earth does not, however, give license to dominate and exploit the planet.

Friends, I would encourage us all ~ today and every day ~ to take seriously the awesome responsibility that our God has given us to tend the gifts of Creation, and to pause and humbly offer our prayers of thanksgiving. Good resources to use would be Pope Francis’ Prayer (printed below) and Sam Hamilton Poore’s *Earth Gospel: A Guide to Prayer for God’s Creation* (published by Upper Room Books, Nashville).

Grace and Peace,

*Rick*

EVANGELISM SUNDAY 2015: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you...”

Get ready for Evangelism Sunday, September 27, 2015. Our scriptural theme from John 20:21 is centered in the words of Jesus that are at the core of who God is and what God is about. God *sends* Jesus, who with Jesus *sends* the Holy Spirit, and the three together as the Triune God *sends* you and me. We are *sent* into the world— not only gather together—but also to engage those outside the church. For more information, please follow this link: <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/evangelism-sunday-2015-father-has-sent-me-so-i-sen/>

Available materials include an introduction, a free sample [“Gathering (Identifying Ministry Shifts in order to Accomplish God’s Mission)”] from our *Engage Mission curriculum*, and worship and liturgy materials—to help you move from an inward “church” focus to an outward “people in your community” focus.

## DREAM GRANTS AVAILABLE

**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 second window, **applications need to be at the synod office by November 15, 2015.**

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMISSIONERS SOUGHT APPLICATION DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 15

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 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.

From <https://oga.pcusa.org/section/ga/ga/>: The 222nd General Assembly will convene with worship at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 18, and adjourn no later than noon on Saturday, June 25. Some important events precede the official start of the assembly: on Saturday morning, commissioners and advisory delegates are invited take part in Riverside Conversations - a debate-free time to begin conversing about some of the topics before the assembly.

The [proposed docket](#) includes more information on the official assembly meetings.

The assembly schedule will include many other optional events and meals sponsored by various entities and organizations. These can be good ways to learn about church programs, meet other attendees with similar interests, and hear outstanding speakers.

Opportunities abound for spiritual nourishment at the assembly. The assembly begins with worship on Saturday morning. On Sunday morning, all participants will have the opportunity to worship in area churches; transportation will be provided. Worship services and bible studies are planned throughout the week.

## THANK YOU FROM PRESBYTERIAN WORLD MISSION

Dear Minnesota Valleys Presbytery,

Thank you so much for your support of the South Sudan Education and Peacebuilding Project! We really appreciate your joining Presbyterian World Mission in this daring initiative. Please hold our continued success in your prayers.

We recently completed the report for the second quarter for 2015, and I emailed you a copy. The Presbyterian News Service picked up on one of the stories that Nancy Smith-Mather had included in the report, and re-wrote it into an article for wider distribution. It provides a very touching re-telling of the story of a former child soldier, and gives a good summary of the context of the education project. Here is the link to that article: <https://www.pcusa.org/news/2015/8/24/world-mission-works-south-sudanese-partners-build/>

Please share this article as widely as possible! We thank you for your continued prayers and gifts.

Thanks!



Dr. Bruce Whearty, Church Support Associate  
1-800-728-7228, extension 5157 or (502) 569-5157

## SOUTH SUDAN, EDUCATION AND PEACE BUILDING (FROM WEBSITE)

Working for education and reconciliation in South Sudan. With more than a century of work in the world's newest and one of its poorest nations, Presbyterian World Mission, serving with committed Christian partners, is poised to help South Sudan move toward a brighter future. Our partners, the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan (PCOSS) and the ecumenical group Across, feel a strong sense of call and responsibility to provide a quality education for South Sudanese children that instills Christian values. Likewise, our partner RECONCILE (Resource Center for Civil Leadership), another ecumenical group, is committed to building peace in the name of Jesus Christ. Presbyterian World Mission has joined with these partners to assist and empower them in developing their capacity to respond to these needs. The goal of the South Sudan Education and Peace Building Initiative is to increase access to a basic effective Christian education for the children of South Sudan and to promote peace and reconciliation in South Sudan necessary for schools to function, the nation to heal and communities to develop. This will be accomplished through: strengthening the education programs of the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan, supporting the peace building work of RECONCILE and the provision of two mission co-workers to accompany our partners in this challenging task.

## 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

## LEADING LONG, LEADING WELL WORKSHOPS

September 28–October 1, 2015 in Jamestown, ND

Leading well in today's church is especially challenging for clergy. How do you remain resilient so you can focus on leading God's mission in the world, when the future of God's church feels so out of focus? Adaptive Leadership is a style of leadership that's needed for the 21st century church, and staying its course requires resilient leaders who understand the importance of their own self-care.

In April, the Presbytery of Northern Plains offered a two-day workshop for its clergy members - Leading Long, Leading Well. The leaders of the event, Rev. Dr. Mark Sundby and Ms. Mary Kay DuChene, were superb and the reception was so enthusiastic that the participants requested a Part II.

Mark and Mary Kay are coming back! Part 1 of Leading Long, Leading Well will be repeated, in Jamestown, ND, on September 28th and 29th, and the new Part II will be offered on September 30 and October 1 ([see brochure](#)).

**Cost:**

\$100.00 per training session due by September 11, 2015. Please register early, this training must have at least 20 participants for it to be held. Meals and hotel accommodations are on your own.

**Location:**

Leading Long, Leading Well will be held at United Presbyterian Church of Jamestown (302 2nd Avenue SE, Jamestown ND). Part I will begin on Monday, September 28, at 9:30 a.m. and will end on Tuesday, September 29, at 5:00 p.m. You are encouraged to stay for Part II of this training. Part II will begin on Wednesday, September 30, at 9:30 a.m. and will end on Thursday, October 1, at 5:00 p.m.

**Questions:** Please contact the Northern Plains Presbytery office at 701-772-0783 or email [pnppoffice@gmail.com](mailto:pnppoffice@gmail.com)

**To register:** You may either register online by filling out the form on the Northern Plains Presbytery website or download the [brochure](#) and mail it to the Presbytery office.

**More information about the workshops:** <http://www.northernplainspresbytery.com/#!/leading-long-leading-well-workshop/c12xe>



The fall curriculum quarter begins Sunday, September 6. Haven't ordered your church's curriculum? Don't worry! At the PC(USA) Store you will find downloadable curriculum for children, youth, and adult. Purchase, download, and print today!



**Growing in Grace & Gratitude**—Bible Story Based. Ages: 3-5, 5-7, 8-10, Multiage. Format: Download or Printed; Quarterly or 9-Month Plan. With [Growing in Grace & Gratitude](#), the new PC(USA) children's curriculum, transform the lives of children and those who love them, shaped by grace and gratitude.



**Feasting on the Word Curriculum**—Lectionary Based. Ages: Children, Youth, Young Adult, Adult. Format: Download or Printed; Quarterly, 9-Month Plan, or 12-Month Plan. Based on the best-selling commentary series; explore lectionary passages in ways suitable for all ages.



**INformed: Adolescent Development Resources**—Issue Based. Ages: Younger Youth, Tweens. Format: Download; Stand-Alone Lesson Plans. Comprehensive lesson plans and articles for parents, leaders, and youth; talk about subjects that are sometimes difficult to discuss.



**Presby Youth**—Bible Story Based. Ages: Younger Youth, Tweens, Older Youth. Format: Download; Quarterly. The best of *We Believe* and *Faithfully Asking Questions*, [Presby Youth](#) downloads are à la carte to meet your church's needs.



**We Believe Workshop**—Thematic. Ages: Multiage. Format: Download; Individual Workshops. Provide a solid foundation for your rotation with *We Believe Workshop*.

Shop all PC(USA) curriculum [here](#).



*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 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

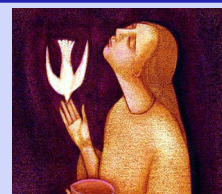
E-mail address if available \_\_\_\_\_

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

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



## Pray for the Next Pres Team



### CALENDAR

Friday, September 4: Karen out of the office

Sunday, September 6: Rick preaches at First Presbyterian Church of Ashby

Monday, September 7: Office closed

Tuesday, September 8: Next Pres Team meets at 9:00; Council meets at 1:00

### MARK 7:24-37

#### The Syrophoenician Woman's Faith

From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophoenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. He said to her, 'Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' But she answered him, 'Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.' Then he said to her, 'For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter.' So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

#### Jesus Cures a Deaf Man

Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, 'Ephphatha', that is, 'Be opened.' And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. They were astounded beyond measure, saying, 'He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.'

