

THE VALLEY BRIDGE



September 15, 2015

SEPTEMBER 20: 17TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
25TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Proverbs 31:10-31; *Psalm 1*; James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a; Mark 9:30-37

Theological Education/Seminaries

Fellowship of Prayer: First Presbyterian Church of Winnebago

Rev. Michael A. Roys & Rev. Kathy Blair – pastors

Carol Ricard – Clerk of Session & Secretary

Amber Franklin – Custodian

Kathy Blair, Tara Blair & Mary Jean Miller – Choir Director, Pianist,
Organist

Prayer Concerns:

- Rejoicing with the number of baptisms this past year; plus new members; and weddings
- Prayers for the children / youth / and college students returning to school
- Prayers for a safe harvest in the weeks ahead
- Guidance and direction for all those exploring a ministry of Word and Sacrament
- Blessings on the work of the Nominating Committee; Stewardship Committee; Swiss Steak Committee; Christian Ed Programs; all gearing up this fall



IN THIS ISSUE:

Page 2-4: The Word from Rick: Change Is in the Air

Pages 4: Board Connections; Dream Grants Available

Page 5: Presbyterian Planning Calendars Available; Glory to God Hymnals

Page 6: Calendar; Gospel Reading

Minnesota 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: “CHANGE IS IN THE AIR”



I didn't write a column for you all last week, so this week, you get a double length epistle. With the passing of Labor Day, summer is becoming but a memory and the changes that come with fall are becoming more obvious with each passing day – the corn and soybeans are drying in anticipation of the harvest, the sugar beet harvest has begun, the sumac along highway 23 is becoming noticeably redder, and boats are starting to disappear from the lakes. Yes, change is around us – not only in nature, but here in the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys.

Some wise person once stated that “the only certainties in life are death and taxes,” but I would add at least one more – change. This summer and fall has been and will be a time of change for a number of our congregations as pastors leave and others arrive to begin their ministries. As we move toward the start of fall, I would like to share with you all the changes that have taken and are taking place in our presbytery family.

Several congregations are welcoming new pastoral leadership. First Presbyterian in Pipestone welcomed the Rev. David Hicks as their Interim Pastor in early August. David comes from Phoenix, Arizona. We are eagerly anticipating his assessment of winter in Minnesota!

The Maine Presbyterian Church has welcomed our ELCA colleague, Tom Junkert, as their new part-time Pastor. Tom moves over from the Shared Ministry (PCUSA and ELCA) in Ashby and Dalton. Today, Matthew Zelig, an ELCA seminary student begins serving in a transition ministry role for the Shared Ministry, as those congregations begin their search for a new Pastor. Matthew is a graduate of Yale Divinity School and is completing his “Lutheran Year” at Luther Seminary. He and his wife will become parents for the first time in a few short weeks.

As I write this epistle, there is one more congregation that will be welcoming a new pastoral leader – a congregational meeting was to take place in Kasota this past Sunday. At this point, I do not have official word from the folks there, so I will hold that news for another time.

Finally, on September 1, a “new” congregation was born. By action of our presbytery and the Southwestern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA, the union of First Presbyterian Church and Grace Lutheran Church in Russell became official after over 20 years of cooperative ministry. On September 27, we will celebrate the union of these congregations to officially become the Grace-First Parish of Russell. Today, Jeff Greathouse, becomes the Vicar/Pastoral Leader for that congregation. He will serve the church part-time, while also serving part-time at the Lutheran Campus Ministry at Southwest Minnesota State University-Marshall. Jeff is working toward ordination in the ELCA.

THE WORD FROM RICK, CONTINUED

The arrival of new pastoral leaders, however, is only one part of the change story. As we move deeper into September, there are several pastors who have left, or will soon be leaving their current ministries.

At the end of May, Chris Drew left First Presbyterian in Jackson. Currently, Chris is seeking to discern the new call God has in mind for him and his family. On August 31, Erin Kobs concluded her ministry with the First Presbyterian Church in Saint James. Like Chris, Erin is seeking new opportunities for her continued ministry among God's people.

At the end of this month, Karen and Jim Crawford will be leaving our midst. Karen has accepted a call to the Merritt Island Presbyterian Church in Florida, where she will serve as Pastor, while Jim will be looking for ways to share his ministry gifts with the folks in their new surroundings. At the end of October, Tim Sutton will be retiring from the church in Osakis. Tim, Nancy, and their son, will be moving to Albuquerque, NM, where Nancy has already begun teaching Spanish and ESL courses in the public schools.

The departures of Chris, Erin, Karen, Jim, and Tim mean that four of our congregations will be in a transition, seeking new leadership to carry them into their futures. Jackson is already exploring possibilities and Saint James has begun the search for an Interim Pastor. Ebenezer Church in Renville and First Church in Osakis will soon be starting their own transitional processes.

The last part of the change cycle involves congregations whose ministries have concluded, or will soon conclude. At the end of June, First Presbyterian in Wheaton held its final worship service and the congregation has dispersed to seek new opportunities for ministry. At the end of October, First Presbyterian in Wilmont will do the same, reducing our family to 56 congregations.

Yes, friends, change is ever-present and it is very much close to home. Please take time to meet and welcome David Hicks, Matthew Zelig, Jeff Greathouse, and Tom Junkert into their new ministries in our midst. Offer them your encouragement and support, and celebrate with their congregations the new opportunities that lie ahead.

At the same time, I am grateful for Chris and Sara Drew, Jim and Karen Crawford, Erin Kobs, and Tim Sutton for their ministries in Jackson, Renville, Saint James, and Osakis – and I ask you to join me as we wish them well on the next steps of their journeys into God's future. May they go forward with God's blessings!

THE WORD FROM RICK, CONTINUED

Finally, please be in prayer for congregations that are in transition – Jackson, Saint James, Pipestone, Ashby, Osakis, Ebenezer, and Wilmont. Pray that God will guide them through the days and months ahead. Pray for those from our presbytery who will be giving their time and energies to walk alongside them during the transitions.

May God bless each and every one of us as we seek to be faithful in all that we do, and may what we do be a blessing to God's world.

Grace and Peace,

Rick

BOARD CONNECTIONS

Just in time for annual enrollment and the 2016 plan year, we invite you to register for *Benefits Plan Foundations*, a self-paced, online course available in The Learning Connection. Gain a better understanding of the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by learning about concepts key to the Benefits Plan's design, core and optional benefits for Traditional program members (including changes for 2016), and programs and services available to you through the Board of Pensions.

Registration for the course is limited and available on a first come, first served basis. Use the link below to learn more about this offering, or to register.

Course name: Benefits Plan Foundations. **Course runs** October 1 -November 30, 2015. **Register** by September 30, 2015. Learn more and [register for the course](#).

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. For the second application window, **applications are due at the synod office by November 15, 2015**. Contact the presbytery office for an application.

PLANNING CALENDARS STILL AVAILABLE

The presbytery office still has a small number of 2015-2016 Presbyterian Planning Calendars available for the low purchase price of \$8 each. Call or email Virginia with your order.

GLORY TO GOD HYMNALS

“From the lighter weight, to the return of ‘old favorites,’ to timely new texts, to old tunes, to accessible world music, to the notes at the bottom of each page, to the clear type face, this is a book that the people LIKE. Makes my job a breeze!”

- Jane Van Valkenburg, Director of Music, First Presbyterian Church of Bryan, Texas

What Is Glory to God?

[Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal](#), the new official hymnal for our denomination, has received an abundance of accolades since its publication, from musicians, pastors, worship scholars, and congregants across the PC(USA). Below are just a few facts about the new book:

- There are 853 hymns, spiritual songs, and psalms in Glory to God
- Songs range from traditional hymns to spirituals to Taize to contemporary praise to global
- A full 25% of the texts have been written since 1990
- The hymnal contains forty-eight pages of essential liturgical resources, including multiple services and the texts for the Lord's Prayers and Apostles and Nicene Creeds in English, Spanish, and Korean.
- There are multiple print and electronic editions, including a comprehensive online edition, eBook edition, projection editions, and a popular App.

For more information about the hymnal, including ways to raise funds, educate your congregation, and introduce the book to your church, please visit www.pcusastore.com/hymnal. You'll find free resources, a detailed list of products and prices, and a complete list of contents for the new book. While you're there, sign up for a free 30-day trial of the online version of the hymnal, an indispensable resource for worship planning.

To learn more about the hymnal or interact with other users of Glory to God, please visit our Facebook and Twitter pages:

Facebook: [Facebook.com/GlorytoGodHymnal](https://www.facebook.com/GlorytoGodHymnal)

Twitter: [@Glory2GodHymnal](https://twitter.com/Glory2GodHymnal)



Pray for the Next Pres Team



CALENDAR

Tuesday, September 15–Thursday, September 17: Rick out of the office

Wednesday, September 16: Committee on Preparation for Ministry meets at 10:00 at First Presbyterian Church of Redwood Falls

Thursday, September 17: 9:00 Budget & Finance conference call

Thursday, September 17–Friday, September 18: Karen on vacation

Sunday, September 20: Rick visits Christ United Presbyterian Church of Marshall

Monday, September 21: 10:00 Staff Meeting; Virginia out of the office in the afternoon

Tuesday, September 22: Committee on Representation meets at 10:00 at the presbytery office

MARK 9:30-37

Jesus Again Foretells His Death and Resurrection

They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, ‘The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.’ But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

Who Is the Greatest?

Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, ‘What were you arguing about on the way?’ But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, ‘Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.’ Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, ‘Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.’

