

THE VALLEY BRIDGE



September 22, 2015

SEPTEMBER 27: 18TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
26TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Esther 7:1-6, 9-10; 9:20-22; *Psalm* 124; James 5:13-20; Mark 9:38-50

Evangelism Sunday

Fellowship of Prayer: Westminster Presbyterian Church of Worthington

Pastor: Rev Galen Smith, *Youth Coordinator:* Krista Petersen, *Administrator Assistant:* Diana Vallego, *Financial Secretary:* Holly McCuen, *Custodians:* Bill & Diana Vallego, *Janitor:* Jeff Nelson, *Accompanist/Choir:* Nancy Hofstee and Darlene Rautenkranz, *Clerk of Session:* Le Roy Ennenga, *Chair of Deacons:* Jackie Moore, *Moderator of Presbyterian Women:* Lois Bruns

Prayer Concerns

- That God's care, love and mercy may be experienced in and through our Wednesday evening church family dinners, youth activities and the Sunday School Program.
- For the leaders and participants of the New Beginnings discussion that they may be open to the guidance and nudges of the Holy Spirit.
- For the continuing ministries of the Manna Food Pantry and the Spanish United Pentecostal Church which both share our building.
- For the organization Love in the name of Christ, one of our partners in ministry to the community.



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Minnesota Valleys Presbytery
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320-235-7910

minnesotavalleys.org

Monday-Friday:
8:00-4:30

THE WORD FROM RICK



Last week, I attended our Synod's Presbyter Forum at the Lakeshore Center at Okoboji. Leaders from twelve of our sixteen presbyteries gathered to worship, share what is happening in the lives of our presbyteries, and discuss the challenges and opportunities of mid-council ministry in the Presbyterian Church (USA).

While there, I got to brag about you all and the good ministry that is taking place in our presbyteries. I shared the exciting new mission initiatives that are taking shape in places like Fergus Falls, Willmar, Spicer, and Saint Cloud. I spoke about the excitement of five congregations where new pastoral leaders have begun ministry in the last six weeks; and also reflected on the work of our Next-Pres Team, and the directions that they are travelling. Hopeful that we are creating an exciting future for our churches.

I also got to talk seriously about the changes and the challenges that are facing us here, and ask for my colleagues help as we navigate our way into the future. I shared about three congregations whose active ministries have concluded, looking for ideas to assist the Administrative Commissions working in those communities. I asked for help on behalf of congregations who are living in the in-between times, and are seeking transitional/interim leadership. I also got to make connections across presbytery and state boundaries on behalf of congregations that would like to explore shared ministries. Having trusted colleagues with creative and practical minds is a blessing.

While with my colleagues, we talked about finances, presbytery re-designs and staffing models, new ways to do presbytery meetings, and reconfigured presbytery and synod boundaries. I don't think that we came up with any radically new or earth shaking ideas, but we did agree that these are interesting and challenging times for congregations and presbyteries, and it will require the very best efforts of all of us to meet those challenges. The presbytery is all of us, together, and we can make a transforming difference here in west-central and southwestern Minnesota.

Our presbytery leaders believe that all presbyteries will have very different staffing designs – they are already emerging; that congregations in the presbyteries will need to depend more on one another and less on staff; and, that we will need to be increasingly open to pastoral ministry that will be shared/bi-vocational/part-time. I know that this may not be new news, but it is news around which we are still attempting to wrap our hands. Accepting change is hard, just ask the Israelites in the wilderness!

We also agreed that the work of the presbytery leader – executive presbyter, general presbyter, presbytery administrator, transitional executive, or whatever we are called – is a lonely work, and on the rainy drive back from Okoboji, the realization hit me . . . yes, it is, but it is also a privileged work, because of who it is that has called me to do this and because of our fifty-seven congregations who have included me into their lives. For that privilege, I say thank you!

THE WORD FROM RICK, CONTINUED

What the future holds is not clear, but we know who holds our future. Where we are headed is still being determined, but we know who holds the cosmic roadmap. We always wonder if we will have sufficient resources, but we know who holds the key to the supply closet. The future is God's and we are called to journey together and seize the opportunities that lay ahead.

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

DATES TO KEEP IN MIND

As the Fall season begins and most of our congregations return to a full and busy schedule of activities, it never hurts to look ahead. Here are a few important dates for you to keep on your personal and congregational calendars.

October 31 (Saturday) - Fall Presbytery Meeting at Hope Church in Spicer

November 30 (Monday) - Advent Open House and Hanging of the Greens at the Presbytery Office

February 6 (Saturday) - Winter Presbytery Meeting

February 29-March 2 (Monday-Wednesday) - Stewardship Kaleidoscope Conference in San Antonio, Texas - Information on line at www.stewardshipkaleidoscope.org

NEWS FROM CLEARWATER FOREST: SUMMER WRAP-UP

What a great year so far! Our summer programs continue to grow. Including the two week-long youth work groups, we provided incredible faith-filled opportunities for over 660 campers which represents a 10% increase in campers. Additionally, over 550 youth participated in one of 17 Camp in a Van programs throughout the Synod.

The staff and volunteers worked hard and provided countless opportunities for youth leadership including planning and leading worships, providing new camper's choice activities, and leading grace before meals.

New this year were Chaplains in Residence who assisted with worship, helped with the Quest groups, and were present to be with campers and staff. We also had several volunteer nurses, counselors, and kitchen aides that made the program run so smoothly!

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY

An experienced, intentional Interim Pastor is being sought for the First Presbyterian Church of Saint James. The position description has been created and a Ministry Information Form (MIF) - ID Number 03802.AC - is in the process of being posted to the Presbyterian Church (USA) Church Leadership Connection. If you, or someone you know would be a good fit for this opportunity, please check out the MIF on line, or contact Jan Zender at jzender@cccinternet.net.

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.

ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL ASSOCIATION NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN ST. LOUIS

I recently attended the Administrative Personnel Association (APA) National Conference in St. Louis, Missouri, and would like to share a little about the association and this trip. The Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys area is part of the Greater Midwest Region, which also includes Missouri, Iowa, Kansas, Wisconsin, and Illinois. Established in 1976, the Administrative Personnel Association promotes continuing education, individual growth, communication, and fellowship for its members. Anyone working in the offices of Presbyterian entities—churches, presbyteries, synods, the General Assembly, Board of Pensions, etc., are invited to become members.

This APA National Conference offered such classes as *Getting in Shape Fiscally*, *Risk Management*, *Book of Confessions*, *Directory for Worship*, *Legal Matters*, *Polity I*, *Polity II*, *Core Principles of an Effective Meeting*, *Personal Investing*, *GA Entities* and *Church History*. This was a special conference for me, because my *Church History* class filled my final requirement for Certification Level One in APA. I received a certificate and pin and was recognized by the body. Thanks to the presbytery and Personnel Committee for its support also.

I highly recommend joining APA to all of our church office support staff—secretaries, administrative assistants, office managers, bookkeepers and treasurers. The membership is \$75 per year, and every class and every conference are useful and valuable to our positions in the church and also our personal lives. This year, I took *Getting in Shape Fiscally*, and doing the pre-class homework (looking at where the money goes monthly and yearly/household budget) was a real eye opener! The instructors were approachable, intelligent, helpful, interruptible with questions and excited about their subjects.

One more thing—the group sure knows how to have fun! This picture was snapped at lunch one day. Rick Young, the guy in the middle, was one of the instructors. He is the President and CEO of Texas Presbyterian Foundation and used to be a Regional Representative for the Board of Pensions and seems to be a sought-after instructor. He taught the *Polity II* class and *GA Entities*. The three women surrounding him are some of the people you might meet if you go to a conference! Margaret, Cindy and Theresa.



Consider joining the Administrative Personnel Association! If you have any questions, feel free to call or email me (Karen Lange).



Pray for the Next Pres Team



CALENDAR

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

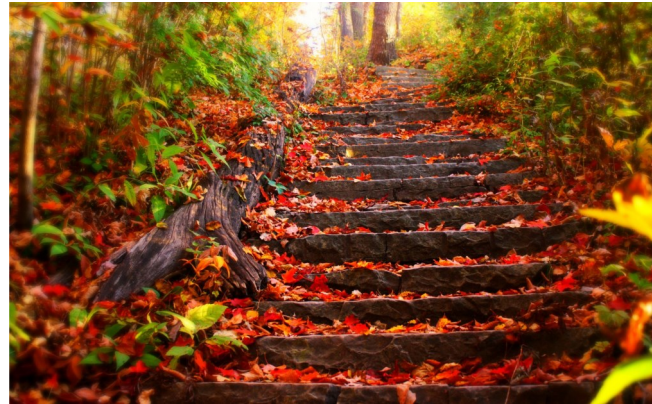
Wednesday, September 23–Friday, September 25: Rick out of the office

Friday, September 25: 12:00 Book Club: The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry

Sunday, September 27: Rick attends Grace First Parish at Russell

Monday, September 28: Virginia vacation day

Wednesday, September 30–Friday, October 2: Virginia and Karen attend Synod Staff Retreat



MARK 9:38-50

Another Exorcist

John said to him, ‘Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.’ But Jesus said, ‘Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterwards to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.’

Temptations to Sin

‘If any of you put a stumbling-block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell.’ And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.

‘For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.’