

# THE VALLEY BRIDGE



January 13, 2015

## JANUARY 18: 2ND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

1 Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20); *Psalm* 139:1-6, 13-18; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20;  
John 1:43-51

### Fellowship of Prayer: First Presbyterian Church of Kasota

Clerk of Session: Marleen Goetl

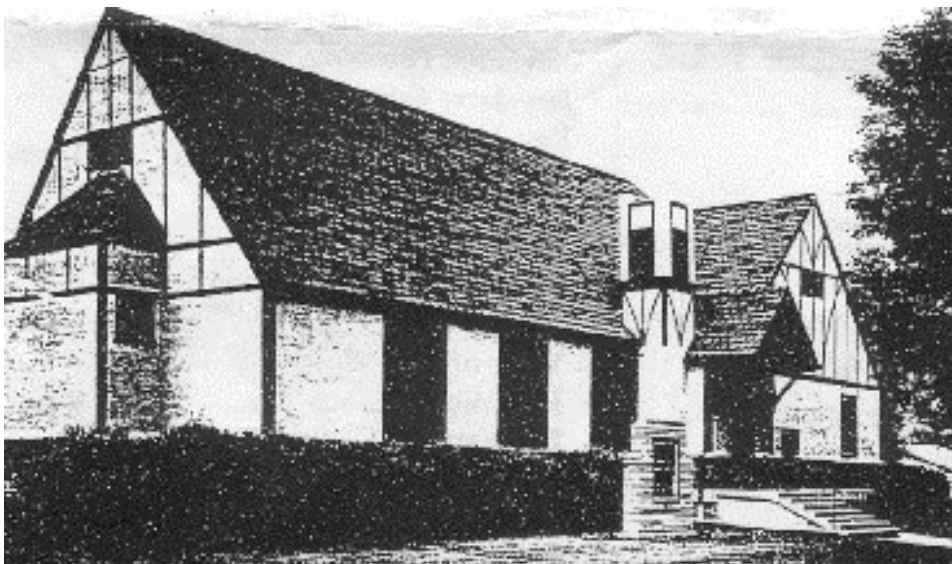
Ruling Elders: Jeanette Baker, Dennis Pasbrig, Connie Ryan, Brenda Loeffler, Kara Lehman, Kathy Sondergaard, Sally Roberts, Jess Gunderson, Jeff Gunderson

Organist: Anita Secrease

Care of the church: Connie Ryan

Moderator: Rev. Dawn Carder

Prayers for members of the Pastor Nominating Committee and the congregation as they discern where God is leading



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## THE WORD FROM RICK



It is hard to believe that I have been a part of the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys for fifteen months now, and I can say that I am feeling really blessed to have been invited to be on this journey with you all. During this time there has been an interesting mixture of very positive, hopeful, and exciting moments, moments of challenge, and moments of anger, frustration, and unhappiness. Some days are harder than others, but each day has provided me with opportunities to see God's Spirit at work in the people of our congregations.

The best part of my week is Sunday morning. I am still working on making it to every congregation for a Sunday worship experience, but I can say that I am getting closer. Karen Lange keeps working to set up visits to the remaining congregations, and I hope to have been everywhere by the summer. At the same time that I am completing the "first round," I am working on return visits and several of those have taken place as well.

I continue to set aside at least two, and usually three Sundays each month to worship with our congregations and share greetings from the presbytery. I have also enjoyed sharing the prayer concerns of our presbytery and praying with the congregations for their pastoral leaders and their sessions. While Karen keeps my schedule and makes a majority of the contacts, I want all congregations to know that they are welcome to offer invitations for me to come and visit – they don't have to wait for Karen! Additionally, when I first came, I indicated that I was not necessarily looking for preaching invitations – as I really wanted to hear our preachers. As we move into this year, that has changed! While I don't need to be preaching every week, I will gladly accept one (maybe two) preaching invitation each month – first come, first served! Many of my colleagues are doing this on a regular basis and have found it to be a great experience – I am going to see if they are right! As I said, Karen knows my schedule, so you can contact either me or her to get on my calendar.

Remember that I also like to be involved in special events – anniversary celebrations, mission projects, installations, officer training, special programs, and potlucks. I am open to those kind of invitations as well. Again, let me know how I can be a partner in your ministries!

I look forward to our continued life together, especially the times that I get to be a part of your worship and fellowship. I really enjoy my Sunday expeditions throughout this presbytery. We have wonderful congregations, some really fine pastoral leaders, and great people! I hope to see you soon!

Grace and Peace,

*Rick*



## WHAT'S UP WITH NEW BEGINNINGS?? LOOKING FOR SOME ASSISTANCE!

The nine congregations involved with the New Beginnings initiative are preparing for a visit from the New Beginnings assessors who will be in our presbytery February 23-27. In order to be ready for the assessor, each congregation is doing its homework, gathering data and other information that will enable the assessors to prepare a report for the congregations' use in discerning future opportunities and directions. This is a busy time for these congregations!

One important part of the assessment process takes place in the form of a congregation gathering, from 7:00-8:45 p.m. on the evening of the assessor's visit. We are currently in need of a volunteer or two who would be willing to spend a night leading the congregational gathering for a couple of our congregations. The process for the gathering is laid out, and it is a matter of following the New Beginnings guidelines while moderating the congregation's conversation. This allows the assessor to listen and record.

We are looking for someone who enjoys leading groups and would be willing to give an evening to assist a sister congregation as they explore their life and ministry (presbytery will reimburse mileage expense).

Our needs are for:

Tuesday, February 24 at First Presbyterian in Redwood Falls; and

Thursday, February 26 at either First Presbyterian in Brainerd or Westminster Presbyterian in Worthington (Rick can't be in two places that night, so if one gets covered, Rick will go to the other!)

If you would be interested in helping out, please contact Rick Carus at 320.235.7910 - [rick@minnesotavalleys.org](mailto:rick@minnesotavalleys.org) ~ for the specifics!

## WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

### ECUMENICAL PRAYER SERVICE: "GIVE ME A DRINK" (JOHN 4:7)

An Ecumenical Prayer Service in celebration of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will be held on Sunday, January 18, at 2:00 p.m. at Zion Lutheran Church, 504 North Gilman Avenue, Litchfield.

We encourage members of our congregations in the east-central region of our presbytery to join with other Christians in this very special time of prayer and worship. Following the service, there will be a time for fellowship.

Our Designated Executive Presbyter, Rick Carus, will be representing our presbytery's leadership at this service.

## MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

Presbyterians are a connected people, and we know that our pastors and church members have contacts across this country. We have decided that we want to capitalize on our connections and use them to assist congregations that have ministry opportunities to be filled. It is our intention to use this newsletter to help get out the word about opportunities that exist in our midst.

Please, help your brothers and sisters as they search for new pastoral leadership. If you know someone who would be a good fit for any one of these positions, please encourage them to go online at the Church Leadership Connection ([clc.pcusa.org](http://clc.pcusa.org)) and take a look at the Ministry Information Forms for these opportunities.

Pastor: Full Time- Zion Presbyterian Church, Ellsworth and Emmanuel Presbyterian Church, Rushmore - ID Number - 09163.AD0  
PNC Chairperson: Randy Jacobs - [rjjacobs@centurytel.net](mailto:rjjacobs@centurytel.net)

Pastor: Part-Time - First Presbyterian Church, Russell (Grace First Parish) - ID Number - 03801.AB0  
PNC Chairperson: Pamela Bush - [pambush@woodstocktel.net](mailto:pambush@woodstocktel.net)

Pastor: Part-Time - Maine Presbyterian Church, Underwood - This MIF will be available soon.  
PNC Chairperson: Jerry Hangartner - [jerbus@arvig.net](mailto:jerbus@arvig.net)

Pastor: Part-Time - First Presbyterian Church, Kasota - This MIF will be available soon.  
PNC Chairperson: Dan Honetschlager - [dh5449@mnsu.edu](mailto:dh5449@mnsu.edu)

## OH, CLERKS OF SESSION, IT'S STAT TIME! STAT TIME!

Stated Clerk Pamela Prouty—[pam@minnesotavalleys.org](mailto:pam@minnesotavalleys.org)—(507) 627-5486

At the October Presbytery meeting information about submitting the General Assembly Statistical Report was distributed. The due date for this report is February 6, 2015. Here are a couple of reminders. The website to use is <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/churchwide-ministries/stats/>. Your password has not changed unless you changed it. The congregation does not need to approve the report, only the Session. And GA is recommending using an internet browser other than Internet Explorer. If you have no idea what this is about, please give me a call or an email.

The Clerk's Annual Questionnaire 2014 link: <http://caq2014.pcusa.org/> will be available mid to late January 2015. As clerks this is a simply survey and it is optional. The due date for this questionnaire is March 21, 2015.

On another note, make sure your corporation gets renewed for 2015.

## EVENTS ON THE HORIZON

Here is a calendar of significant leadership development conferences and events for your calendar! Keep your calendars up to date, so that you don't miss out!

January 18 .....Ecumenical Celebration for Christian Unity at Zion Lutheran Church in Litchfield - 2:00 p.m.

January 27-29 .....Synod COM/CPM Leadership Retreat at Mount Olivet (Information available from COM and CPM Chairpersons)

February 4-7 .....[Association of Presbyterian Church Educators](#) Annual Event, Baltimore

February 7 .....Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys

March 9-11 .....[Stewardship Kaleidoscope](#), Kansas City (more information coming soon!)

March 16-18 .....["Next Church"](#) Annual Gathering, Chicago (more information coming soon!)

June 18-21 .....[Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women](#), Minneapolis

July 26-31.....[Synod School](#) at Buena Vista University, Storm Lake (brochure and registration information coming in February!)

## PAUL BOTH RETURNS

*Submitted by Peter Mann*

Paul's first newsletter describing his experiences in South Sudan is now available (and is attached if you received this by email).

Paul has returned from South Sudan to Minnesota until late May. He has a powerful PowerPoint story and sermon message to share with congregations. Contact Paul to reserve a time for him to visit your church so the congregation



can learn firsthand about another part of the world, from a Refugee himself and recent graduate of Dubuque Seminary, under the care of our Presbytery.

He is currently booked as follows:

January 25 at Brainerd

April 12 at Crosslake

April 19 at St. Cloud

## *Presbyterians Today* | 2015 Lenten Devotional *Draw Near*

*Presbyterians Today's* new Lenten Devotional for 2015 invites you to journey with Jesus to his cross and resurrection with the help of the book of Psalms, often called the prayer book of the Bible. Along this journey, you'll sample a variety of spiritual practices and seek prayerful ways to draw nearer to God.

*Draw Near* features a Scripture reading, meditation, prayer, and set of reflection questions for each day of the Lenten season. The beautifully-illustrated devotional is a perfect daily companion, making it easy to grab a moment for quiet meditation.

Lynne M. Baab, author of this year's devotional, has written numerous books about Christian spiritual practices. She is a PC(USA) minister who now lives in New Zealand, where she is a lecturer in pastoral theology. Her husband, Dave Baab, created the rich pen and ink watercolors throughout.

Your congregation is invited to order these devotionals through the presbytery office. The deadline to order is January 20. If the number of orders reaches 250, the presbytery will be placing a bulk order at \$1.65 per copy. Please call or email Karen at the presbytery office: 320-235-7910 or [karen@minnesotavalleys.org](mailto:karen@minnesotavalleys.org).

## THANK YOU NOTES FOR GUATEMALA SCHOLARSHIPS

*Submitted by Edith Alvarez*

The Occidente Task Force - and by extension, Minnesota Valleys Presbytery - recently received 15 thank you notes from the 17 recipients of the \$250 scholarships that are provided to the children of pastors in Occidente Presbytery, our MVP sister presbytery in Guatemala. The children are selected by the Occidente International Partnership Committee. It may not seem a large amount for a scholarship, but many of these pastors work two to three jobs, in addition to pastoring their churches, to provide for their families. It helps to cover the cost of uniforms, school supplies, lunches, etc. and to serve as an incentive for a student to do well in school, so it does make a difference for the child and his/her family. Of these 15 students, 14 passed their classes and were promoted to the next grade; the only one who did not, was a little boy who is having to repeat the first grade. Their new school year began in January.

Six of these scholarships are funded through the Occidente Task Force budget; eleven are provided by churches throughout the presbytery. If your church, PW, mission committee, and/or individuals would like to provide a scholarship for 2016, contact Pastor Jim Krapf. Prayer support for these children and their families is as necessary as the financial support. Please join us in this effort.

## Denomination in prayer for former GA moderator

It is with deep sadness that we call on members and friends of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to pray for the Reverend Syngman Rhee, Moderator of the 212th General Assembly (2000). The denominational and ecumenical leader is battling an aggressive form of cancer, and his family reports that he is being moved to hospice care.

Rhee was the first Asian American to serve as GA Moderator, was a national staff leader, and was president of the National Council of Churches from 1992 to 1993. We surround him, his wife, Haesun; and his children, Anna, Peter, and Mina; in love and prayer.



### **The Reverend Gradye Parsons**

Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

### **Elder Heath K. Rada**

Moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

## CALENDAR

Tuesday, January 13: 10:00–2:30 Council meets at the presbytery office

Thursday, January 15: 10:00–2:00 Budget & Finance Committee meets at the presbytery office

Sunday, January 18: Rick at First Presbyterian Church of Litchfield; 2:00 p.m. Ecumenical Celebration for Christian Unity at Zion Lutheran Church of Litchfield; John McKay visits First Presbyterian Church of Mountain Lake

Monday, January 19: Office closed



## JOHN 1:43-51

## Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow me.' Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.' Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.' When Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards him, he said of him, 'Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!' Nathanael asked him, 'Where did you come to know me?' Jesus answered, 'I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.' Nathanael replied, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' Jesus answered, 'Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.' And he said to him, 'Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'

