

THE VALLEY BRIDGE



January 20, 2015

JANUARY 25: 3RD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Psalm 62:5-12; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31;
Mark 1:14-20

Fellowship of Prayer:

United Presbyterian Church of Kerkhoven

Temporary Supply: Revs. Scott & Leanne Thompson
Clerk of Session: Cathie Kallstrom

Prayer concerns: Please pray for support and guidance as the congregation discerns its future.



LINKS TO LAKESHORE CENTER AT OKOBOJI
NEWSLETTER:

CrossTalk E-News: [http://
www.lakeshorecenteratokoboji.org/Portals/0/E-news%
201_16.pdf](http://www.lakeshorecenteratokoboji.org/Portals/0/E-news%201_16.pdf)

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Presbytery of MN Valleys
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: “PRAYERS AND REMEMBRANCE WITH A COMMON THREAD”



As I write this, it is only Monday and the week is still young, but if nothing else significant were to take place between now and next Sunday, I would say that this has been an incredible week.

Sunday marked the beginning of “The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.” I see this week marked on my planning calendar every year, and I admit, I don’t often think or do much about it . . . and from what I can tell, neither do many of the communities in West-Central Minnesota.

Just before Christmas, I received a letter from the Southwestern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA, inviting me to participate in an ecumenical prayer service in Litchfield to commemorate the start of this week. Before saying yes, I asked our local pastors, Scott and Leanne Thompson, if we did anything like this in Willmar. I was informed that nothing was planned, which disappointed me, but also permitted me to say yes to the event in Litchfield.

So, on Sunday, following a terrific morning spent with the saints at First Presbyterian Church and lunch fellowship with Pastoral Leader, Gordy Pennertz, and his family. I headed to Zion Lutheran Church to share in this worship experience. It was a delight. It was not a huge crowd, but it was a spirited group. Bishop John LeVoir of the Diocese of New Ulm preached the message for the day, while Bishop Jon Anderson of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA, and I shared in leadership, while also representing our regional councils and congregations. It was wonderful, Protestants and Roman Catholics gathered in one place praying for the unity and witness of all Christian everywhere. I am glad that I got involved. This was an experience I would hope that more of us can share next January. It is important for us to be in prayer for and encourage others who share a common faith.

From Litchfield, I moved on to Minneapolis. People who know me know that I am the farthest thing from a “morning person” that you can imagine. So, to get up at 5:45 a.m. to be in the Minneapolis Convention Center at 7:00 a.m. on Monday means that something truly significant was happening; and it was. On Monday, I was part of a gathering of 2000 people who came together to honor the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This was the 25th anniversary of this special breakfast gathering in Minneapolis. General Mills and the United Negro College Fund have been co-sponsors of this event practically from its start.

THE WORD FROM RICK: “PRAYERS AND REMEMBRANCE WITH A COMMON THREAD” CONTINUED

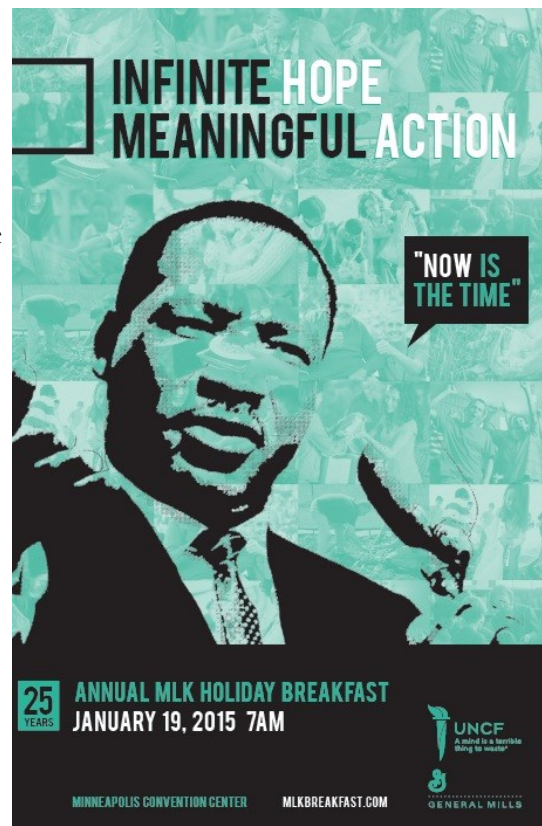
The experience was overwhelming. The keynote speaker was Vernon Jordan, one of the truly great civil rights advocates of our time. It was a privilege to hear him speak and not only share his personal experiences Martin Luther King, the Kennedy’s – John and Bobby, Lyndon Johnson, Medgar Evers, and others, but also to hear him preach a message of hope and his belief in the coming time when we will fully live out the vision of Martin Luther King.

Probably the highlight of Vernon Jordan’s speech was his retelling of an event that took place in 1980. Jordan told about his brush with death, being shot in the back. As he recovered in the hospital, he received numerous telegrams from people who wished him well. He said that the first, and most significant, message came from Governor George Wallace of Alabama – a man who opposed so much of what Jordan was about. Months later, when both men were together at a gathering, Wallace had the State Troopers lift his wheelchair up onto the stage, so that Wallace could wheel himself over to Jordan . . . so that they could share a hug!

As I walked out of the convention center into a now bright Minneapolis morning, I was very aware of what the last 24 hours had been all about. There was one word that tied the Prayer Service in Litchfield and the MLK Birthday Breakfast in Minneapolis, and that word was “Unity.” On Sunday, we lifted up the vision of Christian Unity . . . and on Monday, we lifted up the vision of the unity of all people across the whole spectrum of human experience. Unity . . . along with Peace, it is not only what Martin Luther King, Jr. was all about, but it was what Jesus Christ modeled for us. It is what people of faith and good will continue to seek each and every day. Unity and Peace . . . it has been God’s plan from the beginning of time. May we find ourselves not only in prayer, but in meaningful action, so that one day vision might truly become reality.

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 still need one volunteer who would be willing to spend a night leading the congregational gathering on Tuesday, February 24 for the First Presbyterian Church in Redwood Falls. 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).

Thanks to Pastor Bob Bartlett for stepping to the plate and offer leadership for the Worthington conversations. If you would be interested in helping out, please contact Rick Carus at 320.235.7910 - rick@minnesotavalleys.org ~ for the specifics!

2015 PER CAPITA

General Assembly	\$ 7.07
Synod of Lakes & Prairies	\$ 5.20
Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys	<u>\$21.16</u>
Total	\$33.43

Recommended 2015 Mission Pledge Percentages:

General Assembly	18%
Synod of Lakes & Prairies	13%
Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys	69%

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 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

March 16-18 “[Next Church](#)” Annual Gathering, Chicago

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!)

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 the 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 on-line at the Church Leadership Connection (clc.pcusa.org) and take a look at the Ministry Information Forms for these opportunities.

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

Pastor: Part-Time – Maine Presbyterian Church, Underwood – This MIF will be available soon. PNC Chairperson: Jerry Hangartner ~ jerbus@arvig.net

Pastor: Part-Time – First Presbyterian Church, Kasota – This MIF will be available soon. PNC Chairperson: Dan Honetschlager ~ dh5449@mnsu.edu

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

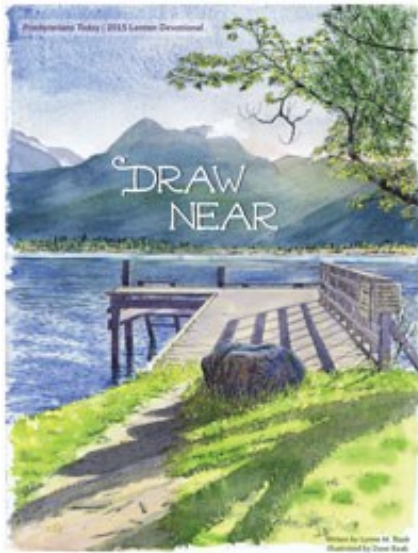
Stated Clerk Pamela Prouty—pam@minnesotavalleys.org—(507) 627-5486

The due date for the statistical report is February 6. 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/>. As clerks this is a simply survey and it is optional. The due date for this questionnaire is March 21.

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

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 (TODAY!). 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.

CHURCH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SERIES
LAKESHORE CENTER AT OKOBOJI
JANUARY 30-31, 2015



Attend a series of workshops that will help you grow as an individual leader as well as a church leader. Bob Houser, a retired pastor and Presbytery Executive, will lead a series of development workshops January 30-31. Join us for one of the three uniquely designed workshops for \$20, or attend all of three for \$50! Lodging and meal packages available. The registration deadline is January 23. [Click here for pricing and lodging.](#)

EVANGELISM & HOSPITALITY—Friday, 9 a.m.—noon

We will look at the three phases of evangelism—invitation, welcome, and assimilation. We will consider some of the reasons we fail to do evangelism and ways we might encourage people to think in terms of inviting. We will also look at a wide range of practices that make the church more welcoming to the stranger.

ACTIVATING & ASSIMILATING NEW MEMBERS—Friday 1:30-4:30 p.m.

These are closely related in that appropriate assimilation helps to keep people from becoming inactive members. We will also take a look at making discipleship intentional ministry of the church. It moves from the idea of receiving new members to making active and faithful disciples.

ELDER TRAINING—Saturday 9 a.m.—Noon

We will look at the traditional tasks of the elder and also the role of the elder as a spiritual leader of the church.

Brochure: http://www.lakeshorecenteratokoboji.org/Portals/0/Church%20Leadership%20Development%20Event%202015_1.pdf

CALENDAR

Tuesday, January 20: Committee on Ministry meets at the presbytery office from 10:00–3:00

Thursday, January 22: Presbytery packet deadline

Sunday, January 25: 10:00 Rick visits Hope Presbyterian Church of Spicer

Monday, January 26: Presbytery packet posted to website

Monday, January 26–Tuesday, January 27: COM/CPM New Moderator Training

Tuesday, January 27–Thursday, January 29: COM/CPM Conference at Mt. Olivet

A decorative banner with a light blue background and a dark blue border. On the left, there is a stylized illustration of wheat stalks and wavy lines representing water. In the center, the text "Pray for the Next Pres Team" is written in a large, red, serif font. On the right, there is a small, square, dark-colored image of a person in prayer, holding a white dove above their head.

Pray for the
Next Pres Team

MARK 1:14-20

The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.' And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

