

THE VALLEY BRIDGE



March 17, 2015

MARCH 22: 5TH SUNDAY IN LENT

Jeremiah 31:31-34; *Psalm 51:1-12* or *Psalm 119:9-16*; Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33

Fellowship of Prayer:

First Presbyterian Church of Maynard

Staff Leadership List:

Sue Thompson, Clerk/Treasurer/ Presbytery Commissioner
Marie Anderson, Youth Mission Outreach Coordinator and Educator
Gary Coulter, Maintenance and Elder
Rev Beverly Crute, M.A., Ph.D., M.Div., BCC-APC, Pastor

Prayer Concerns:

- Shut-ins and Care Center Residents
- Those recovering from pneumonia
- Those walking with grief and loss
- Members involved with our Lenten Bible Study using *Presbyterians Today* Lenten Devotional, "Draw Near"
- Good Friday Service at 7:00 am on April 3
Service will utilize Four Names given to Jesus: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
Service will also include Sacrament of Holy Communion.
- Easter Day Celebration, Sunday, April 5
9:00 a.m. Easter Brunch/Breakfast
10:00 a.m. Easter Worship Service
- Sunday, April 12
10:30 a.m. Fellowship Time
11:00 a.m. Service of Worship and Welcoming Visit of Rev. Rick Carus, Designated Executive Presbyter



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THE WORD FROM RICK: “DRINKING FROM A FIRE HOSE”



“Drinking from a Fire Hose!” That was an expression that I heard used on multiple occasions last week, and I have to admit that there were several times when that aptly described my experience of the Stewardship Kaleidoscope.

For the uninitiated in our midst, the Stewardship Kaleidoscope is an annual event that is sponsored by a number of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) related entities – The Presbyterian Foundation, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Board of Pensions, and others. The focus is simple – the week is all about stewardship and creating a culture of generosity out of the abundance with which God has blessed us.

This year’s event included time for four plenary presentations, four workshops, worship, and plenty of table conversation. Two of my workshops focused on stewardship on the presbytery level, and this is where the spray from the fire hose knocked me over. I spent time with leadership from two presbyteries that are fairly similar to ours – Winnebago and Northern Kansas. I walked out of the workshops thinking that we have so much to learn from these colleagues, and so much to do in order to develop the potential we have here in Minnesota Valleys. I am still processing what it was that I heard, and trying to figure out ways to bring some good stewardship practices into the life of Minnesota Valleys. It is a work in progress, and I am energized by the possibilities.

I was not the only Minnesota Valleys person trying to drink from the fire hose last week. Joining me in Kansas City were Genette Carleton (Mankato), Doug Dent (Fergus Falls), Al Jergenson (Foley), Michael Roys (Winnebago), and Darin Seaman (Saint Cloud). During the week, I noticed each one of them feverishly writing down information that grabbed their attention. In sharing about the workshops that were attended, my colleagues seemed to be gathering an abundance of significant insights to share in their congregations, and with you. Like me, they got drenched by the fire hose!

In the coming weeks, I will be asking these folks to share a significant learning, or two, with you. Watch for those nuggets in upcoming editions of the Valley Bridge, and in order to get the sharing started, I want to share some sobering facts shared by Scott McKenzie from Horizons Stewardship. McKenzie told us that in the last three years, Charitable Giving in the United States is up 4.4%, while Religious Giving has decreased 0.2%. To further illustrate his point, he shared these facts:

THE WORD FROM RICK, CONTINUED

Episcopalians give 2% to Charity . . . 1.1% to Religion
 Presbyterians give 1.8% to Charity . . . 1.0% to Religion
 Methodists give 1.6% to Charity . . . 1.0% to Religion
 Catholics give 1.5% to Charity . . . 0.8% to Religion

McKenzie said that people will give to organizations whose mission they believe in – “. . . people want to do stuff that matters. In the church, we have the opportunity to invite them into something significant. It is not a big deal – it is the biggest deal!”

He called for a “Revolution in Generosity” and offered this re-wording of the Declaration of Independence as a starting point:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident . . .
 that all people are created in the image of a loving, giving, and generous God.
 We believe real life, true liberty, and eternal joy are only realized when we live
 lives of abundance generosity and sacrificial love.”

Something for us to prayerfully ponder. Have a good week!

Grace and Peace,

Rick

SCENES FROM THE ROAD: THE STEWARDSHIP KALEIDOSCOPE



Rev. Dr. Claudio Carvalhaes of McCormick Seminary speaks at the first plenary of the Stewardship Kaleidoscope.



Table conversation with some of MN Valleys folks (L-R): Genette Carleton, Darin Seaman, an unidentified friend from Kansas City, Al Jergenson, and Michael Roys.



Pastor Al Jergenson reviews the schedule for the Stewardship Kaleidoscope.



Darin Seaman getting in the spirit during “This Little Light of Mine.”

DESIGNATED EXECUTIVE PRESBYTER CONTRACT TO BE EXTENDED

Submitted by Personnel Committee Chair Scott Thompson

After deliberating with the Next Pres Team, the Budget and Finance Committee, and the Presbytery Personnel Committee, the Presbytery Council voted in its March meeting to extend Rick Carus' contract. Rick's original two-year contract was set to expire this coming October. The Council has been appreciative of Rick's hard work getting to know our Presbytery's members and churches in the past year and one half. He has also been an integral part of assisting the Next Pres Team in its visioning for the future of the Presbytery. The plan is for Rick to stay on at least until the end of 2016, and help the Presbytery's transition as it adopts and adapts to the forthcoming plan from the Next Pres Team. The Personnel Committee will coordinate with Council to tweak Rick's job description after the Next Pres Team's plan is adopted, with the aim to restructure and re-title his position to become a Transitional Executive Presbyter.

We are pleased that Rick has so quickly integrated into the life and work of our Presbytery, and we're happy to invite him to continue his work with us in the coming months as we embrace the future of our Presbytery.

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!

- June 18-21 [Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women](#),
Minneapolis
- July 26-31 [Synod School](#) at Buena Vista University, Storm Lake
Synod School catalogs are available at the presbytery office.



CHURCH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IV

Submitted by Stan Menning

Recently I attended a workshop on Evangelism at Lakeshore Center at Okoboji. It was led by Rev. Robert Houser. Bob is a retired pastor and Presbytery Executive, most recently the EP at Central Nebraska Presbytery. Our conversation for the day included the different phases of evangelism, activating and assimilating new members, hospitality and inactive members. I am writing a series of articles sharing about each of those topics. I will not be providing a lot of commentary on these issues, but rather sharing materials that Bob provided us with that serve as check points and conversation starters. Last week I shared a list of how people were introduced to the church. The research shows that 70-80% of people in churches are there because a friend or relative invited or brought them. This week we will look at some reasons why people don't invite others.

WHY WE DON'T INVITE

- Fear
- We dislike canned formulas
- We don't know how to start the conversation
- Too personal
- I am unsure of my own faith
- Too busy
- I'm not proud of my church

These are pretty self-explanatory. I will resist the temptation to comment on most of them and encourage readers to talk about any that apply to them and how they might overcome them. Number two refers to evangelism tools such as "Four Spiritual Laws." In our discussion about number four we were reminded that while a person's faith might be personal, it is not necessarily private.

As you ponder reasons you might not want to invite someone to church, I want to share the most meaningful quote I brought home from General Assembly last year. Please put your reason for not inviting someone to church on one side of the balance with this thought on the other side. Lillian Daniel said this in her message to us. "We need to stop wringing our hands about declining numbers in the church and start wringing our hands about the number of hurting people who do not have a faith community to support them."

TOP 10 FINANCIAL MISTAKES CHURCHES MAKE (AND HOW TO FIX THEM)

A 90-minute webinar on Tuesday, March 24 at 1:00 p.m. central time
featuring Eric Heinekamp

Church finances are unique and challenging. Issues like housing allowance, medical insurance, taxes, endowments and charitable contributions are complex - and yet are often managed by volunteers and staff with little training.

But there is hope! In this webinar we will look at **real financial challenges** facing our congregations and **simple, practical ways to improve money management** so your congregation can focus on their mission.

Who should attend? Pastors, elders, church staff and anyone working with church finances.

Participants will:

- **Hear common mistakes** church volunteers and staff make related to money;
- **Learn practical tips, tactics and tools** to reduce operating costs and increase income;
- **Discover useful resources** to help churches be better at financial planning, spending, taxes, audits and stewardship.



Presenter **ERIC HEINEKAMP** is director of business affairs for the Presbytery of Chicago. He is responsible for the finance, accounting and real estate of the presbytery and meets frequently with churches in the presbytery to consult on these topics. Eric is a second-career teaching elder who was called to work in the church after more than 20 years in management roles in commercial banking.

[Click here to learn more, register for the live event or on-demand replay \(\\$29.95\), or pre-order a DVD \(\\$43.95\).](#)

www.pres-outlook.org

Contact Jana Blazek at jblazek@pres-outlook.org with questions or for group pricing.

GOVERNANCE AND MINISTRY:
PASTOR AND SESSION AS PARTNERS

A 90-minute webinar on Tuesday April 14 at 1:00 p.m. central time

featuring Dan Hotchkiss

True partnership begins with clear **role boundaries, effective delegation and a constructive system of accountability.**

Alban author and consultant Dan Hotchkiss offers fresh perspective, language and practical steps to help a church to move beyond frustrating and ineffective management of boards, clergy and staff.

Participants will:

- Keep the church's mission at the center of its ministry
- Clearly define the roles and authority
- Make space for spiritual discernment and holy conversations.
- Give up micromanaging!



DAN HOTCHKISS, a long-time senior consultant for the Alban Institute, has helped hundreds of churches and synagogues in over 30 different denominations.

[Click here to learn more, register for the live event or on-demand replay \(\\$29.95\), or pre-order a DVD \(\\$43.95\).](#)

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CALENDAR

Wednesday, March 18: Virginia vacation day

Thursday, March 19: 9:00 a.m. Budget & Finance conference call; 10:00–3:00 Committee on Ministry meets at the presbytery office

Friday, March 20: Virginia vacation day

Tuesday, March 24: 10:00–2:00 Congregational Resources & Development meets at the presbytery office



JOHN 12:20-33

Some Greeks Wish to See Jesus

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, ‘Sir, we wish to see Jesus.’ Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, ‘The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.



Jesus Speaks about His Death

‘Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—“Father, save me from this hour”? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.’ Then a voice came from heaven, ‘I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.’ The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, ‘An angel has spoken to him.’ Jesus answered, ‘This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.’ He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.