

THE VALLEY BRIDGE



April 14, 2015

APRIL 19: 3RD SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 3:12-19; Psalm 4; 1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48

Fellowship of Prayer:

First Presbyterian Church of Osakis

Staff/Leadership: Pastor Tim Sutton, Clerk of Session Janice Larsen

Session Members: Ellen Bangtson (organist), Janet Macey (treasurer), Keven Withers (custodian), Barb Neumann, Shari Maloney, Randy Neumann, Chad Schwanke, Rod Mitchell, Jason Mathews

Prayer concerns:

Guidance for our involvement in New Beginnings

Those needing comfort and healing in our aging congregation



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Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys

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Willmar MN 56201

320-235-7910

minnesotavalleys.org

Monday-Friday:
8:00-4:30

THE WORD FROM RICK: “JUST HANGING AROUND”



Thanks to the efforts of Virginia and Chuck Molitor, one of my most cherished possessions, my “Mission Trip Quilt” has claimed its rightful place on the south wall of my office.

The quilt was created by one of my “Texas kids” – Lauren Brown (now Simpson), with assistance from a number of our friends and colleagues. It was presented to me on December 26, 2009, just as my time of service on the staff of Grace Presbytery was coming to its end – on a day when my last mission trip with the youth and young adults of Grace Presbytery was getting set to begin.

This wonderful quilt is composed from the t-shirts that gave fifteen summer youth mission trip groups a sense of identity during my nearly twelve years on the staff of Grace Presbytery. Behind each quilt block, there are stories about the incredible experiences that we had together in exotic mission trip hot spots like Bison (South Dakota), Center (Colorado), Montgomery (West Virginia), Steubenville (Ohio), and Ciudad Juarez (Chihuahua, Mexico). If you ever ask me about anyone of those trips, be prepared for a detailed account of that adventure.

My quilt provides me with wonderful memories of the things that we accomplished on each of those fifteen adventures – of lives transformed and relationships established. It reminds me of the places where our Presbyterian Church and its partners are at work making a difference in peoples’ lives in the name of Jesus Christ. It also reminds me of moments of extravagant generosity and selflessness on the part of so many faithful people.

Be assured – this quilt does more than just hold memories of the past, and of youth mission trips. It is a witness to the present, for it also holds the presence of a large portion of my personal “Cloud of Witnesses.” It holds the lives and experiences of nearly three hundred fellow travelers who were a part of those trips, as well as the countless people with whom we lived, worked, and shared life during those expeditions. The quilt is a witness to lives that have been transformed and are still being transformed because of the moments that we shared together.



THE WORD FROM RICK: “JUST HANGING AROUND”

For me, my “Cloud of Witnesses” is not just about those saints that have gone on before me, but it is also about those saints with whom I share life on a daily basis and in those special moments. When I see the quilt, I feel the presence, not only of those who shared in those trips, but all who have graced, and still grace, my life in some most significant ways. For me, the “Cloud” is there ~ hanging around, looking over my shoulder, and sometimes looking me straight in the eye.

My Mission Trip Quilt is more than fabric hanging on my wall and it is about more than the mission trips – it is about my “Cloud.” It represents a significant part of my past, my present, and my future. It is about experiences and people who have transformed and still transform me, as well as those times and places where my presence has been transforming for others. It is a reminder of so many “God moments.”

I give thanks to God for giving me such incredible experiences, and for filling my life with such an awesome “Cloud of Witnesses”. When you are in the neighborhood – come see my “Mission Trip” – “Cloud” – “Quilt”!

Grace and Peace,

Rick

SAD NEWS

Julia Lambert

Julia Lambert, the widow of Rev. M. Robert Lambert (Executive Presbyter from January 1979–May 1991), has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. She is currently in home hospice. If anyone would like to send a card, they may be sent to her at: 326 NW 28th St, Watertown, SD 57201

Ron Kes

Dated April 7 from Jay Wilkinson, Synod of Lakes and Prairies Stated Clerk/Treasurer:

Friends,

I wanted each of you to be informed about some sad news we received this morning, without many details. Sometime last night, Ron Kes, the husband of the synod’s Administrator for Personnel and Programs, Mary Kes, died. I’m sure that you will join with us in grieving with Mary and her family and will keep them in your prayers. If you would like to send a card to Mary, please send it to the synod office and we will be sure she gets those cards.

STEWARDSHIP NUGGETS

In early March, six members of our presbytery attended the Stewardship Kaleidoscope in Kansas City, Missouri. Each of the participants

was asked if they would be willing to share their insights with the saints of Minnesota Valleys Presbytery, and most of them agreed to do so. Here are their observations.



This week's nuggets come from the Reverend Michael Roys, Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Winnebago, and Chair of our presbytery's Budget and Finance Committee.

The overarching theme in the workshops I attended was that stewardship is rooted in people buying into / investing in the ministry of God through the Church.

Here are some thoughts for congregations and the presbytery to consider:

- *When we ask people how God or their Church touched / changed their lives . . . no one says, "Via the annual budget."*
- *Narrative budgets provide a step toward the reason for giving*
- *People are looking for / listening for stories that will excite them showing them that something worth doing is happening in the Church . . . if we don't tell those stories . . . people will give (or even go) elsewhere. (There are major implications for our Churches and the Presbytery)*
- *It is important to have people think about / practice sharing "how God touched / changed me" (could be done at each council meeting; in worship) . . . "What keeps bringing me here" . . . "What I feel God wants me to do with the gifts I have received"*
- *Recruit people for stewardship committees who give generously and are articulate about why they give so generously.*
- *When people give / invest in that ministry, we need to thank / appreciate what they've done... mail merge letters to the top 25% givers would likely reach those who give 75% or more of Church giving. (Editorial NOTE: Personal, hand-written notes could also be considered.)*
- *If you don't know what each person gives...at least knowing the names of those in the top 25% allows appreciation to happen (i.e. ~ an alphabetical list without amounts). Pastors are trusted with all kinds of "private" information...giving need not be the "one area" that's off limits*
- *For the "non pledger" . . . remember that we pledge to make payments for the car we buy; the house we live in; and the things we order by credit card ~ we are pledgers.*
- *Finally, God is the perfect example of generous giving ~ God gave his best and his all ~ Christ was his most precious possession ~ we are created in God's image, and hence should reflect that kind of giving.*

PRESBYTERY MISSION FAIR

Submitted by Candace Adams

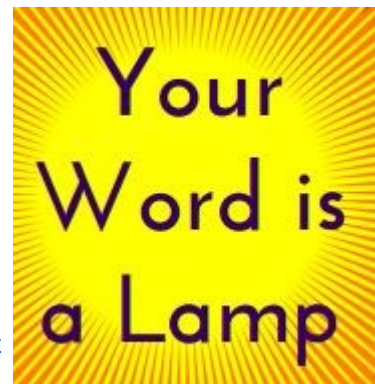
On Tuesday, May 12, the Presbytery will gather in St. Cloud. The theme of the day is “Our Presbytery in Mission.” The day will include a mission fair and four workshops: Next Pres Team, Occidente Partnership, the Presbyterian Education Board and Young Adult Volunteers.

Each congregation is invited to bring a poster or display board featuring a mission endeavor that is important to their congregation. The mission fair will occur immediately following lunch. Our goal is to have every congregation participate in this opportunity!

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Wee Kirk conference planned in May at Calvin Crest

The 2015 Great Plains Wee Kirk Conference is planned for Wednesday through Friday, May 4-6, at Calvin Crest Camp, Conference & Retreat Center near Fremont, Nebraska. The event brochure can be found at: <http://www.fellowship.community/wp-content/uploads/GPWK-2015-Broch-FINAL.pdf>



Be sure to check with the Congregational Resource and Development about “scholarship” assistance for this conference.

WELCOME PAUL SNYDER

Please join the saints of Zion Presbyterian Church (Ellsworth) and Emmanuel Presbyterian Church (Rushmore) as we welcome the Reverend Paul Snyder to the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys. Paul’s first Sunday as Pastor of Emmanuel and Zion churches was this past Sunday, April 12.

DOING GOD'S MISSION WITH OCCIDENTE PARTNERS

Submitted by Jim Krapf

Six Minnesota Valleys Presbytery delegates will be going to Occidente Presbytery in Guatemala from April 22 to 30. They will have the opportunity to build their friendships and faith. Central to this visit will be discerning with our partners God's will for our future. With the anticipation of diminishing financial resources and restructuring of our presbyteries, we will seek to plan the best ways we can advance



the mission that we share. We want to complete our presbyteries' commitment to the goals of our "2013-2016 Pact of Companionship in Mission" and begin to envision the next four-year pact. We ask for your prayers as we mutually build our faith and friendships around the follow questions for our conversations with our partners:

1. As we have shared in the building of homes for your pastors and their families and we see that many youth are involved in your churches, what can we learn from you about developing faith within our families?
2. You have used the term "transforming global disciples." What can this mean for our partnership and for the church members in MVP?
3. Out of the rupture and reunification of the Presbyterian Church in Guatemala, what can you teach us about reconciliation and the inter-relationship between evangelism and social ministries?
4. You are planning to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. What can you teach us about being Reformed Christians in a culture greatly influenced by Roman Catholicism, Pentecostalism and traditional Mayan spirituality? How could this strengthen our witness as Presbyterians in MVP?
5. What can you teach us about why people have been and are immigrating to the U.S? What are the effects of gang members and criminals being deported back to Guatemala? What role should MVP churches have in ministry with Guatemalan immigrants in our communities and in advocating for comprehensive immigration reform for the benefit of communities throughout the U.S.A.?
6. How can we best partner in doing God's mission with you in Occidente? How can prayer partnerships between congregations work better? With diminishing financial resources what changes do we need to address? If "fortification" of your pastors and their families remains central, how can we best work together for this goal? Should we be exploring other efforts, such as youth exchanges (if we can overcome the difficulties of obtaining visas)?

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

The following Minnesota Valleys congregations continue to be engaged in a search for pastoral leadership. We continue to encourage the saints of our congregations to keep these congregations and their PNC's in their prayers. In addition, if you know of individuals who would be good prospects for these positions, please invite them to check out the Ministry Information Forms on line at the PCUSA's Church Leadership Connections (CLC) - at:

<http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/clc/>

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 - ID Number - 03870.AA0. PNC Chairperson: Jerry Hangartner - jerbus@arvig.net

Pastor: Part-Time - First Presbyterian Church, Kasota - ID Number - 03787.AA0. PNC Chairperson: Dan Honetschlager - dh5449@mnsu.edu

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Please join us for the celebration of the life of the United Presbyterian Church of Kerkhoven at its closing service on Sunday, April 19, at 2:00 p.m. There will be a time to share memories during coffee time following the service.



CALENDAR

Tuesday, April 14: 10:00–2:30 Council meets at the presbytery office

Wednesday, April 15: 10:00–2:00 Personnel Committee meets at the presbytery office

Thursday, April 16: 9:00 Budget & Finance conference call; 10:00–3:00 Committee on Ministry meets at the presbytery office

Friday, April 17–Saturday, April 18: New Beginnings gathering at Redwood Falls



LUKE 24:36B-48

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.' Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.'

