



Synod Snaps

*Weekly e-news from the Synod of Alaska-Northwest,
A judicatory of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*

November 20, 2009

A Long Time Coming

A reflection by the Rev. Joyce M. Emery, Transitional Synod Executive

A long-time ago, I was a young mother desperately looking for practical parenting methods. I tried James Dobson for awhile. I hit a gold-mine when we were able to attend two workshops: Active Parenting and then Parenting for Peace and Justice with Jim and Kathy McGinnis. Wow! Here were the tools we needed to support four growing children. The best idea was the family meeting. We instituted them at least once a month for many years. Here we would work through issues, feelings, plan days together, figure out rules and consequences. What a relief it was to embrace teenagers who knew the consequences for their actions because they had developed those consequences. We didn't need any big confrontations, groundings, or dramatic scenes. We just worked through what had been agreed upon. Sound idealistic? Well, yes, but this shared decision-making process really worked.

I had the privilege of attending two delightful (yes!) presbytery meetings this week. (I could have attended four.) At one meeting we moved two inquirers to candidacy. Both inquirers were poised, faith-filled and articulate. The body ruminated in the joy of questioning each of these inquirers: for Christian experience and sense of call. One presbytery member told me about how he taught one of the inquirers in Sunday School and saw then her great gifts for ministry. The congregants, sessions and committees of presbytery have used our order and rules, with consequences, to call people into the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. By the time a person gets to the floor of the Presbytery it should be a joyful season of interchange – and eventually examination. Theological examinations should be fun! Committees should do their work to make sure that statements of faith reflect the nature of our tradition and faith, and practice what we believe to be true on this side of glory. If an individual cannot articulate our faith before a committee then they should not make it to the floor of the presbytery. This requires a tremendous amount of investment in each session member, each committee member AND each inquirer. The work will pave the way for God to mold and make each other – and then finally a vote to affirm on the floor of a presbytery meeting – and will be the grand confirmation of a work that has been a long-time coming. Thanks be to God!

Looking Ahead

November 19-22 Moderator's Conference, Louisville, KY

November 26-27 Thanksgiving Holiday - Synod office closed
December 7-11 Western Area Staff Conference

Proverb of the Week

*The eye that mocks a father
and scorns to obey a mother
will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley
and eaten by the vultures.*
Proverbs 30:17

Prayer for the Week

*God give me work
Till my life shall end,
And life
Till my work be done.*

-- English, on the grave of the novelist Winifred Holtby, 1898-1935

Noteworthy News and Events

Having trouble viewing the links? [Click here to go to the web version.](#)

The Courage to Preach

[Congregational Leadership Northwest](#) has added [The Courage to Preach](#) Seminar, to be held on three Thursdays in 2010, January 14, February 11 and March 11. Tony Robinson, who has taught preaching at the National Cathedral's College of Preachers and elsewhere leads this seminar. Build your skills and strengthen your confidence for this crucial and demanding ministry. Classes will be held at United Christian Church in Renton. Mornings will be devoted to learning Tony's approach to the three basic tasks of preaching: listening for a Word, building the sermon, and delivery/embodiment. Afternoons will give you a chance to preach, and to hear others preach in a supportive and constructive community of colleagues.



[Congregational Leadership Northwest](#) offers a wide collection of workshops and other learning opportunities.

[Calling All Lay Leaders](#) will be offered on January 30, 2010. The workshop will be led by an experienced lay leader, Lyda Hawes, and Tony Robinson, a pastor who has devoted a great deal of time and energy to helping lay leaders succeed and grow in the lay leadership experience. details

CLN's [Festival of Preaching Northwest](#) is scheduled for April 19 - 21, 2010. For details and registration, click here

Tax Tips Webinar

[BOP](#) is offering a Tax Tips Webinar for Ministers and Churches on December 9 at Noon to 3 PM Pacific time.

[Click to register now](#). The deadline is November 20. This is a free event that helps ministers and churches understand clergy taxes. Clergy and church tax expert Richard R. Hammar, J.D., LL.M., CPA, will explain recent tax law changes that will affect ministers and churches, deductible expenses, a ten-step year-end checklist, how lending money to a minister could put a church's tax-exempt status at risk, and other important tax issues.



Opportunities at Whitworth **Certificate in Teaching the Bible** Feb.-May, 2010

Church leaders are expected to teach the Bible in various settings with a variety of different constituents. The Certificate in Teaching the Bible Program is designed to give pastors, Sunday school teachers and lay ministry leaders insight into using the Bible more effectively with children, youth and adults. [More...](#)



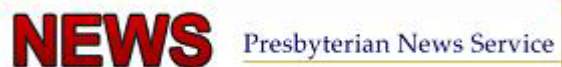
Preaching Clinic Feb - May, 2010

Good preaching is at the heart of effective ministry. The preaching clinic provides an opportunity for pastors to come together with peers for the purpose of sharpening preaching skills in a safe and supportive environment. We will talk about the art and dynamics of good preaching and work at strengthening and honing preaching skills through the use of sermon videotapes and in-class preaching and reflection. [More...](#)

Increase in U.S. hunger spurs faith groups' reaction

Direct relief, systemic changes are needed, PHP's Farrell says

by Bethany Furkin
Presbyterian News Service



LOUISVILLE - This week, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported that 17 million American households (49 million people, or 14.6 percent of the population) were food insecure in 2008, the highest number since the government began tracking food insecurity in 1995.

The number of children affected by hunger also increased, according to the report. In 2008, 506,000 households (1.3 percent of households with children) experience very low food security. This was up from 323,000 households (0.8 percent of households with children) in 2007.

According to the report, food-secure households are defined as having "consistent access to enough food for active healthy lives for all household members at all times during the year."

Food-insecure households are broken into two subcategories: low food security and very low food security. Low food security is translated into not knowing where one's next meal will come from. Very low food security is translated into cutting portion sizes or skipping entire meals.

For the Presbyterian Hunger Program, these numbers reflect a "tragic reality," given that the United States produces more than enough food for everyone, said Ruth Farrell, coordinator of the program.

"Hunger is a complex phenomenon with economic, political and social causes," she said. "Congregations feed hungry people in their neighborhoods, but month after month, many of the same people and new ones will line up for help. Jesus responded with compassion to those in need and at the same time questioned the very structures that caused inequities. Be it greed, ignorance, historical reasons, wastefulness, climate change or unjust market systems, we cannot tolerate hunger."

Largely funded by the One Great Hour of Sharing special offering, the hunger program supports congregations working to respond to hunger holistically.

In Greeneville, Tenn., the non-profit group Rural Resources runs a mobile farmers' market that bridges the transportation gap for people who lack access to a grocery store with fresh and healthy produce. The produce offered - at or below grocery store prices - is locally grown and creates economic development for local, small scale farmers. Such support circulates money locally and creates prosperity in this impoverished area. Surplus produce is donated to the local food bank and Tabernacle Presbyterian's Mission Soup Kitchen.

Another organization is Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. This year, it's increasing food and economic security for low-income families and small farmers in two Oregon communities by leveraging resources commonly found in congregations - land, commercial grade kitchens and volunteers. This project demonstrates how congregations can develop community kitchens, community gardens and wholesale buying clubs for low-income households. EMO is strengthening farm-to-congregation partnerships with an emphasis on leadership development and empowerment of people with low incomes. The goal is to make fresh, local food accessible to low-income households while providing food literacy skills and marketing opportunities for local family farmers.

"Presbyterians care about hunger and Presbyterians are responding in their communities," Farrell said. "Many are also lifting up changes needed in our laws to address systemic issues."

One such group is Minnesota FoodShare, a program of the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches, which works to influence federal and state legislation. Its priority this year is on reauthorizing child nutrition programs, such as school breakfast and lunch, summer meals and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

Reauthorizing child nutrition legislation is a "critical step in ensuring that children in the United States are fed," Farrell said. To learn more and to receive action alerts, Presbyterians can subscribe to the monthly Food Justice e-newsletter.

Bread for the World, an ecumenical organization that works to influence policies to end hunger nationally and internationally, also emphasized the importance of Congress renewing child nutrition programs. The Presbyterian Hunger Program works with Bread for the World.

"Child hunger is not just a casualty of the recession. It was a problem before the recession, and unless we take the necessary steps, kids will continue to suffer after the economy recovers," said Bread for the World President the Rev. David Beckmann, in a news release. "The recession has made the problem of hunger worse, and it has also made it more visible. Increased public awareness and the administration's commitment gives me hope. To end hunger, our leaders need to strengthen nutrition programs and provide steady jobs that allow parents to escape the cycle of poverty and feed their families for years to come."

In the release, Bread for the World calls President Barack Obama's goal of ending child hunger by 2015 "ambitious but achievable."

Farrell urged congregations to inventory their hunger and poverty ministries to access whether programs

both alleviate hunger and try to attack root causes underlying hunger. For assistance or discussion, contact the hunger program at (888) 728-7228 x5388 or by email.

<http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/091002.htm>

For Such a Time as This

[For Such a Time as This](#) is an innovative new pastoral residency program designed to serve underserved congregations and develop missional pastors by pairing small rural or urban congregations with recent seminary graduates in a two-year pastoral residency relationship. The [Office of Vocation](#) is currently receiving inquiries from presbyteries seeking to serve as potential residency site partners. Interested presbyteries with a significant number of "hard to call" churches are encouraged to [read important information online](#), contact the Office of Vocation by [e-mail](#), or call the Rev. Marcia Clark Myers at (888) 728-7228, x5753.



Winter Retreats at Tall Timber

[Tall Timber Ranch](#) has several great openings for groups this winter! On New Year's weekend (Dec. 31-Jan. 3) Main Camp, Schulze Center and Cedar House are open. Cedar House is also open Jan. 8-10, Jan. 15-18, Feb 26-28, and all of March. Call Tall Timber Office at 509 763-3127 or email [Cathi](#).

Call Tall Timber Office at 509 763-3127 or email [Cathi](#).



Links & Resources

Synod MDC Loan Program: www.synodmdc.org

Presbytery of Alaska: www.presbofak.org

Presbytery of Central Washington: www.cwpresby.org

Presbytery of the Inland Northwest: www.presbyinw.org

Presbytery of North Puget Sound: www.npspresbyterians.com

Presbytery of Olympia: www.olypres.org

Presbytery of Seattle: www.presbytery.org

Presbytery of Yukon: www.pbyukon.synodnw.org

Presbyterian Church (USA) www.pcusa.org

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance www.pcusa.org/pda

"God's grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love imperishable." - Ephesians 6:24 [NEB]

On behalf of the Synod Staff,

Sarah Peniston



Communications Director

email: speniston@synodnw.org

Web: www.synodnw.org

Phone: 206.448.6403

Back issues of Synod Snaps are available on the Synod website: www.synodnw.org. To subscribe or unsubscribe to Synod Snaps, [click here](#) and enter your email address in the Opt into Synod Snaps box.