



Synod Snaps

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

January 22, 2010

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

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

This has been a week for our own presbyteries and council to meet. We have been invited to participate as well in ecumenical prayer services. There is much to pray about. Our United Methodist brothers and sisters lost two of their key mission leaders in Haiti: The Rev. Sam Dixon (Director of UMCOR) and the Rev. Clint Robb. They had just begun a mission strategy meeting at the Hotel Montana when the building collapsed. We Presbyterians have always supported the work of the Episcopalians in Haiti, where we are true partners in medical work. The Episcopalians lost many people. The American Baptists had four congregations collapse in Port-au-Prince. The stories of relationships are streaming across the landscape of our Synod as we listen to our ecumenical partners.

Jesus prayed that we all might be one in John 17. The church union movement gained momentum for some in the 1970's and 1980's. Now we seem to just want to work together in new and old ways, and respect each other's ordination when we are in communion with one another. We have federated and union churches in our presbyteries. The stories are fascinating as congregations take turns worshipping in two or three different traditions, or alternate pastoral service from denominations, or fund different parts of the ministry from different denominational budgets. The role of the "bishop" is always an issue. I'll talk about that next week. For now, join me in praying for every congregation in your neighborhood, that the Christian witness might be strong as we move together in the name of the one who brought us into being – Jesus the Christ.

Looking Ahead

January 25	Personnel Committee Meeting, Synod office
January 26-27	Synod Council Meeting, Synod office
January 28	PJC Training Event
January 28	Higher Education Task Force meeting

Proverb of the Week

*Like cold water to a thirsty soul,
so is good news from a far country.*
Proverbs 25:25

Prayer for the Week

As the eyes of the world turn to Haiti, let us join our hearts in prayer:

God of compassion
Please watch over the people of Haiti,
And weave out of these terrible happenings
wonders of goodness and grace.
Surround those who have been affected by tragedy
With a sense of your present love,
And hold them in faith.
Though they are lost in grief,
May they find you and be comforted;
Guide us as a church
To find ways of providing assistance
that heals wounds and provides hope
Help us to remember that when one of your children suffer
We all suffer
Through Jesus Christ who was dead, but lives
and rules this world with you. Amen.
(Adapted from Book of Common Worship)

-Bruce Reyes-Chow, Gradye Parsons and Linda Valentine

Noteworthy News and Events

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

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...](#)

[Diploma in Lay Pastoral Ministry](#)

June 7-11 and June 14-18, 2010

Churches and religious organizations are looking for qualified men and women to serve in non-ordained positions of pastoral leadership in the church. Unfortunately, many otherwise qualified people are reluctant to pursue these positions because they do not feel adequately prepared biblically and theologically, or they find themselves lacking the practical skills they need to be successful in ministry. Others are already involved in ministry positions but feel limited by their lack of training and ongoing opportunities for development and support.

[More...](#)

Diploma in Worship, Theology and the Arts

Whitworth's Diploma in Worship, Theology, and the Arts is designed to help train, equip, and support church musicians and other worship leaders to serve more effectively in paid and unpaid leadership positions in the Presbyterian Church (USA), as well as in other denominations. The program balances courses in theology with study in the history, development and current issues in worship and arts ministry.

"Presbytery Ten-Year Trends" now available online

Reports provide a bird's eye view of a presbytery's health and direction
Contact: [Susan Lindsey](#), (502) 569-5060

Press Release
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Research Services now provides its popular Presbytery Ten-Year Trends report online, in addition to the existing printed format.

The report, which provides the compiled data from the Session Annual Statistical Report for each congregation in the presbytery over the past 10 years, is highly valued by presbytery executives, as well as synod and congregational leaders.

"I've used Presbytery Ten-Year Trends in work with eight presbyteries and a synod," said Tim Rogers-Martin, executive associate pastor at North Avenue Presbyterian Church in Atlanta. "These trends give a bird's eye view of a presbytery's health and direction — and they let you delve more deeply in areas of particular concern." Rogers-Martin has used the reports to select the top 10 churches within a presbytery, in terms of their percentage of mission giving, change in worship attendance, number of adult baptisms, or increase in membership, and then recruit some or all of them to share best practices with other churches.

Peter Nord, executive in the Presbytery of Baltimore is using the reports as part of the presbytery's re-visioning process as it discerns trends within the presbytery and seeks to provide resources to individual congregations. "We are eager to be able to access these reports electronically and to have them more accessible to our members," said Nord. In the Presbytery of New Brunswick, the report was used to develop a congregational development strategy. Greg Albert, associate executive presbyter, said, "Because of the report, we know which congregations are in trouble and which are doing well."

Kansas pastor Dennis Scheibmeir described using the reports to find congregations of similar size and contexts: "I look for congregations that grew significantly in the previous year — so that I can interview the leadership and find clues to what seems to be working well."

Scheibmeir's efforts are producing results. "The information gathered from these interviews has served to provide our leadership with ideas and hope. As a result, our membership is up, and attendance has grown a little in each of the last four years — even though we are in a rural area with significant population declines," said Scheibmeir. The new service is the result of re-tooling within Research Services that seeks to provide the best data possible, so that the church can make fact-based decisions. "By providing these materials online, Research Services will be able to eliminate the paper costs for congregations and presbyteries that want electronic access to the materials," said Ida Smith-Williams, associate for research and information. A small fee will still be required for a printed version of the reports.

The reports are available online.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) comprises more than 2 million members in more than 10,000 congregations, and answers Christ's call to mission and ministry throughout the United States and the world.

<http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/pressreleases/gamc10006.htm>

InterFaith Advocacy Day in Olympia

Washington Association of Churches invites all to participate in the InterFaith Advocacy Day on **February 16, 2010**. This event is an opportunity for members and friends of our faith communities to gather with other faithful citizens of the State of Washington to "Lift Every Voice" for compassion and justice in the deliberation of our State's public policies. This year's advocacy day will include faith traditions that share a common vision of God's peace on earth. Though diverse in our traditions and political opinions, we are united in our efforts to bring about a more peaceful and just world.

Our State and nation continue to face difficult decisions in this New Year. As the economic depression persists and our State's budget woes worsen, the voices of people of faith are needed more than ever. The Washington Association of Churches (WAC), Lutheran Public Policy Office of WA (LPPO), Church Council of Greater Seattle and other ecumenical agencies, ministries and



representatives from other faiths are planning an inspirational and energizing day. [Register and pay on line](#) or [download a registration form](#) and mail to The WAC, POB 95949 Seattle, WA 98145. Please post and distribute the downloadable flyers also available on the [website](#).

Attendees will have the opportunity to be citizen lobbyists and meet with legislators, legislative staff and issues experts. Bus transportation is available from Seattle and Tacoma. Register early to reserve your seat.

If geography and conflicts with work and schedules prevent you from attending InterFaith Advocacy Day, please hold Tuesday, February 16 in your prayers, share the information in this letter with others and participate in one or more of the activities listed in the "So You Can't Make It to Advocacy Day" flyer on the WAC website.

A confirmation packet, including a detailed map, agenda and background information will be mailed as registrations are received. A \$25 registration fee includes materials for the day, a continental breakfast, and lunch. If you would like more information about the day, or would like to help, please call the WAC (206) 625-9790. You can also request information by emailing wac@thewac.org.

Faithfully,
Alice Woldt
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Hal Mischke, mission pioneer, dies of a stroke

Hal Mischke, who with his wife, Sheila, helped launch Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) mission work in Albania, died Jan. 10 of a massive stroke suffered the previous day at his home in Gig Harbor, Wash.

After the collapse of communism in eastern Europe, Hal Mischke was instrumental in the development of the diaconal program of the Albanian Orthodox Church. Sheila Mischke served as a teacher and principal of GQS Missionary Children's School. At the time of their service they were members of University Presbyterian Church in Seattle.

Sheila Mischke is currently serving as an elder and a staff member at Chapel Hill PC in Gig Harbor (Olympia Presbytery), and is also the chair of the First Cambodian Administrative Commission in Tacoma, Wash.

Hal is survived by Sheila, his loving wife of 32 years; his children, Tamara Mattson, Mark Mischke, Todd Mischke, Hilary Bergeron, Anna Mischke, and Rachel Mischke; daughters-in-law, Jenny Mischke and Emily Mischke; son-in-law, Dan Mattson; 11 wonderful grandchildren; sisters, Myrna Pattison, Sandie Pattison and Nancy Scheidel; brother, Mike Mischke; and brother-in-law, Bob Pattison. Services will be held at 3 p.m., Jan. 18 at Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church in Gig Harbor, Wash

Millwood Community PC Teaches Green Living

The [New York Times](#) recently featured an article called Pastors in Northwest Find Focus in Green, including [Millwood Community Presbyterian Church](#) in Spokane. From the Times: State auditors told the church last summer to close its farmers' market on the church parking lot or the lot could no longer be claimed as tax-exempt. The church kept the market and paid the \$700 in annual taxes. Money is tight, but the locally raised beef and vegetables and, most important, the environmentally-minded customers had become central to the 90-year-old church's ministry. Across the Northwest, where church attendance has long been low but concern for the environment high, some church leaders and parishioners are ringing doorbells to inform neighbors - many of whom have never stepped inside the sanctuary down the street - about ways to conserve energy and lower their utility bills. Some view the new push as a way to revitalize their congregations and reconnect with their nearby community. [Read the article](#)



Matthew Williams for The New York Times

The Rev. Craig Goodwin and Millwood Community PC in Spokane see their farmers' market as a ministry.

Living Waters of the World at Work in Haiti

[Living Waters for the World](#), (LWW) a program affiliated with the Synod of Living Waters, has been heavily involved with water programs in Haiti. Since LWW's first Haiti news update, much has happened as they – and many other organizations and governments – ramped into high gear responding to the earthquake that devastated Haiti last week. The fact that LWW's Initiating Partners (IPs) have placed twenty clean water systems in Haiti over the last several years and we have a LWW Haiti Network coordinating these efforts has placed us in a strong position to act swiftly on the plan developed last week in partnership with [Solar Under the Sun](#).



As a faithful Covenant partner to both IPs and Operating Partners (OPs), Living Waters for the World is committed to:

1. Rebuild all destroyed systems and power each one with solar
2. Retrofit all functioning systems with solar power
3. Work with other agencies and organizations in coordinating joint efforts
4. Explore ways – as these first goals are completed – to develop a program to expand this work into other areas of Haiti.

The first priority has been to learn of the health and well-being of our Haiti partners, the Little Brothers of St. Therese (LBST) with the Catholic Church and OCDES, affiliated with the Haiti Episcopal Church. The wonderful news is that our key partners and their families are safe!

The epicenter of the earthquake was southeast of Leogane along two major faults lines. This area of Haiti has been the center of LWW's work. Though poor communication remains a problem, field reports now allow us to estimate that 50% of our clean water systems have been destroyed. There is good news; we know that at least two systems are up and running and providing clean water for their communities!

Chris McRae and Bob McCoy – LWW's Haiti Network co-moderators – are scheduled to travel to Haiti next week (a remarkable development) to conduct a detailed damage estimate and develop a specific plan of action for system rebuilding.

LWW needs your help!

Please:

1. Pray for all involved in this critical assessment and planning stage
2. Donate to the LWW Haiti Network
3. Spread the word about our plan by sharing this email with others

Thank you for your support and Let Clean Water Flow!

Read more about how you can participate.

Haiti update: how can our congregations help?

by Jerry L. Van Marter, Presbyterian News Service
and Pat Cole, Communications Associate

NEWS Presbyterian News Service

[Presbyterian Disaster Assistance](#) (PDA) reports that food and fuel supplies are limited and there is urgent need to bring in these most essential resources at this time. PDA's Carlos Cardenas is on the ground in Haiti with the immediate response

team of the Geneva-based ecumenical ACT Alliance, which includes the PC(USA). ACT has helped establish 15 sites for distribution of relief items. Food and clean water are a top priority.

It is estimated that 200,000 families, nearly one million people, are without homes and living out in the open air. Temporary shelter is a focus for this next week, PDA Coordinator Randy Ackley said. PDA and its partners are seeking to bring in 20,000 tents to Port-au-Prince in the next week. There are between 3,000 and 4,000 tents currently on site in Haiti.

The greatest need continues to be money. PDA has committed at least \$500,000 to the short- and long-term response to the Haiti tragedy. More than \$200,000 has already been sent from donations received since the quake and from the One Great Hour of Sharing offering receipts.

Contributions can be made in at least four ways:

- Through local church channels
- Online at the PDA Web site
- By phone at (800) 872-3283, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (EST) weekdays
- By mail to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, P.O. Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700.

Another way to help, PDA suggests, is by assembling "Gift of the Heart" kits for shipment and distribution to Haiti. Congregations and individuals can assemble hygiene kits and baby kits. Instructions are on the PDA Web site.

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



"Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in all ways. The Lord be with all of you . . ."
-- 2 Thessalonians 3:16

On behalf of the Synod Staff,

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