

---

**SYNOD OF MID-AMERICA**  
**Reformed Church in America**  
**NEWSLETTER - - - Volume 11, Number 1 - - - January 11, 2010**  
<http://www.midamericasynod.org>  
<http://msyn.org>

**“Healthy classes and congregations through revitalization and multiplication”**

---

**Chicago and Illiana Classes – Belhar Confession Discussion**

Leadership from the churches in Chicago and Illiana classes is invited to a Chicago Classis sponsored discussion time of the Belhar Confession. The classes will vote in the next few months to ratify the decision of the 2009 General Synod to adopt the Belhar Confession as the fourth RCA doctrinal standard. The Belhar Confession addresses the three issues of the unity of the church, reconciliation, and the justice God desires in the world. The discussion time for Chicago Classis and Illiana Classis will be **Saturday, January 23, 2010, 9:00 AM – Noon at Christ Community Church**, 13400 Bell Road, Lemont, IL 60439. See <http://chicago.msyn.org> for more details. More information about the Belhar Confession can be found at the Belhar Confession – Study Center at <http://www.rca.org/Page.aspx?pid=2552>.

**Florida Classis – Belhar Confession Discussion**

Leadership from the Northwest Cluster of the Florida Classis will be having a discussion time of the Belhar Confession also on January 23, 2010. That meeting is **Saturday, January 23, 2010, 10:00 AM at West Coast Church of the Cross**, 3005 South Tuttle Ave., Sarasota, FL 34239. Participants are asked to email Kevin O’Hara ([pastor@mychurchinsarasota.com](mailto:pastor@mychurchinsarasota.com)) with reservations for lunch. Again, more information about the Belhar Confession can be found at the Belhar Confession – Study Center at <http://www.rca.org/Page.aspx?pid=2552>.

**Rural Ministry Conference**

The 28th Annual Rural Ministry Conference sponsored by Wartburg Theological Seminary is scheduled for March 7-9, 2010 at Dubuque, Iowa. The Rural Ministry Conference is where leaders in rural communities and congregations gather to gain insight and inspiration, to network and neighbor that our ministries might be empowered. This year the theme is nurturing generosity: releasing God’s abundance in a time of perceived scarcity. More information including a link to a copy of the brochure and to register, follow this link: <http://www.ruralministry.com/Conference/Conference.htm>

**Coordinator for Women's Ministries – Position Opportunity**

The General Synod Council of the Reformed Church in America is seeking a Coordinator for Women's Ministries. This is an executive position whose primary purpose is to assist the RCA in achieving the goals of Our Call by intentionally pursuing a future in which women are equipped and empowered to fully exercise their gifts in the life, ministry, and mission of the church. The Coordinator for Women's Ministries will skillfully discern and be attuned to the diverse needs of women throughout the church, and will encourage and facilitate the development of multiple “experiential learning communities” of women in response to those needs. The ideal candidate must have a thorough knowledge of the Reformed Church in America and a willingness to embrace its mission and vision. This individual must be a connector, a person with the ability to link, resource, and gather others. In addition, the coordinator should be adept at cultivating potential in others, fostering a movement, and creating “pull”. Excellent communication (both written and verbal), team building, organizational, problem solving, discernment, strategic planning, time management, and interpersonal skills are required. The complete position description can be found at the following location: <http://images.rca.org/docs/resources/WomensMinistriesPosition.pdf>. Interested persons should submit a letter of interest and a résumé to personnel directory, Sharon Hayes ([shayes@rca.org](mailto:shayes@rca.org)).

---

**Prayer Section – please forward this information to those in your church whose gift is praying.**

**January Issue – Intercessors Unite – Focused Prayer within the Synod of Mid-America**

The January issue of the Synod of Mid-America prayer focus tool, *Intercessors Unite*, is available online. It is a tool to help us as a synod focus our prayers on our common concerns. **This issue requests prayer for our church planters, and lists prayer requests received from classes and congregations.** You are asked to click on [Intercessors Unite](http://intunite.msyn.org/IU200912.htm) and pray the prayer agenda listed for the month of January. To find our regional synod's prayer tool follow this link: <http://intunite.msyn.org/IU200912.htm>; there are also links from the synod's home page and resources page (<http://msyn.org>).

### **Prayer Resources**

Resources for prayer leaders can be found on the Resources page of the Synod of Mid-America website: [http://msyn.org/index\\_files/resources.htm](http://msyn.org/index_files/resources.htm).

### **H.O.P.E. Prayerline**

The Prayerline issue for January focuses on renewing our commitment to prayer. "God has a perfect goal for 2010 in mind for each of us. This goal is attainable because God has set it into motion, even if it is just in your heart and mind. Pray that you will discover what God has planned for you in 2010." This month's issue of the [HOPE \(Houses of Prayer Equipping\) Prayerline](http://www.rca.org/Page.aspx?pid=6255) newsletter can be found at this link: <http://www.rca.org/Page.aspx?pid=6255>. Here are some articles in this month's issue:



- Whose Agenda?--David Muyskens offers a reminder about the importance of letting God set our agendas.
- Prayer Walk Stations--Kathy Yeckley describes a prayer walk held by her church.
- The Road to Purity--Dante Girolimon extends a 21-day challenge to bring your life closer to Christ.

---

### **Celebration Stories**

The story in this issue comes to us from Bob James who is the pastor of the church plant, Hope Crossing Community Church, in Sun Prairie, WI. This story is an excerpt from the update letter to folks in Wisconsin Classis:

As you may wonder about our future and ask, "How are you doing?" I'd like to answer with a picture of how God has transformed lives within Hope Crossing's ministry.

The scene begins in early August. A woman desperate for rent money calls. This, as I'm sure you experience, is common in the ministry, but something was different this time. Perhaps it was the Holy Spirit moving my heart to listen more closely. I don't usually do this, but I agreed to meet with her to hear the story of her husband's disabling injuries, his near death from kidney failure, and the dissolution of their assets to pay rent, and this family of 5 coming to the edge of homelessness.

I took the circumstance to the church, and we agreed to help them with a small sum to meet their needs. In the meantime, I felt the Spirit nudge me further, and my wife, Barb, and I began to build a relationship with them.

We were invited their home. They came to our home. We shared the gospel, showed sessions of the Alpha Course to them to help them begin to engage with God, answered their questions, and saw step by step, the Word of God come into their household.

Their poverty situation did not improve—no work, poor health, a young family trapped in the circumstances, and by December they were behind \$3,000 in rent, their car had broken down completely and the landlord said, "Out!"

What do you do when the barriers block hope? You turn to the One who said, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4:18-19)

We talked of their plight at our Small Group. There were other needs in the church. It would take about \$5,000 to pay rent, get a car for this family, fix a car for another; help two others

with unpaid utility bills. A Faithful One in the group said, "Let's ask the church for a special offering." in the midst of Christmas bills and so many pleas for special help? You've got to be kidding.

No. No kidding. It's time to see what God will do. So we asked. Sunday morning December 6, 40 people in church, "To meet the needs of 4 families connected with the church, we need \$5,000. Let's see what God will do."

The first offering came in a check of \$38 from an unemployed woman. The next was \$200 from an elderly widow. In 6 days we had collected \$5,638.

Rent paid, car fixed, utility bills paid. Freedom had come to those captive from circumstances outside their control.

Best of all, from that desperate phone call in August, Jesus has entered into a new home. We baptized the husband 2 weeks ago, the wife has been baptized. The bible has become a daily part of their lives. Praise Jesus!

-----

We share stories with one another so that God's name is praised, first of all. These stories, though, have the added value of encouraging those who do God's work. Please send your stories of God's activity in the revitalization of people or of a whole ministry and stories of the multiplication of ministries to Randy Kooy at [rkooy@rca.org](mailto:rkooy@rca.org).

---

**From Wayne Van Regenmorter, Synod Visionary Leader ([wvanregenmorter@rca.org](mailto:wvanregenmorter@rca.org)):**

***Seek the Full Life...***

We're about to enter the second full week of January 2010. Are you as amazed as I am that it's already been 10 years since "the new millennium," since Y2K and the many predictions of computers crashing around the world? A lot has happened in the past decade:

- Computers didn't crash on January 1, 2000.
- The Space Shuttle Columbia disaster occurred.
- The Boston Red Sox finally won the World Series.
- The Chicago Cubs...need I say more?
- The tsunami in the Far East killed more than 100,000 people.
- Hurricane Katrina struck.
- The average gas price went from \$1.26 to \$4.12 to \$2.85.
- Saddam Hussein was captured and executed.
- iPods are everywhere.
- Social media networking has taken off.
- We all became 10 years older.

Much has even happened this past year:

- The Steelers won the Super Bowl.
- The Yankees won the World Series.
- Michael Jackson died.
- Barack Obama became our first African-American president.
- The economy...need I say more?
- We all became one year older.

And this past month:

- Tiger Woods face troubles. (Pray for him.)
- Oral Roberts died.
- Jimmie Johnson became the first NASCAR driver to win four Sprint Cup Championships in a row.
- We all became a month older.

And this week:

- Chicagoland experienced the impact of lake effect snow.
- We said at least once, "Man, it's cold!"
- The Vikings play the Cowboys this weekend.

We all know that time will continue to march on, and we've just seen that lots can happen without our realizing it really is marching on day to day. I wonder, instead of letting "whatever" happens, how we can take hold of our days and experience the full life that Jesus tells us about in John 10:10? "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (NIV)

I believe that taking hold of our moments, our God moments every day will help us notice that God is active in our day, and therefore we are truly living and not just existing. So in this next decade, year, month, week, day, what will you do to go after God and all that He has for you? I say, "Let's spend this year going for and what God is calling us to do not only in our personal life but also in the places where He has called us to serve Him." People around us need to see that God is alive and active, and we are the ones He's put where we are to see that it happens. It all begins this day, in this moment. Let's live the full life in Him.

Wayne Van Regenmorter

**Schedule:**

January 11: Coaching

Ridley Assessment/Camp Manitoqua

12: Conference Call

Meeting/Gibbsville Reformed Church/Sheboygan Falls, WI

13: Network Meeting/Baileyville Reformed Church/Baileyville, IL

14: Staff Meeting/Christ Community Church/Lemont, IL

Annual Synod Planning Meeting/Christ Community Church/Lemont, IL

Travel to St. Louis, MO

15: Ridley Assessment/Christ's Church/St. Peters, MO

16: Travel to California

17: Sunday Worship

18: Off

19: Meeting/Irvine, California

20-22: COSE/PACT Meeting/Irvine, CA

23: Travel Day

24: Sunday Worship

**Wayne's contact information:**

10088 Prairie Knoll Ct.

St. John, IN 46373

Cell phone: 941-302-1281

Home office phone: 219-365-9649

E-mail: [wvanregenmorter@rca.org](mailto:wvanregenmorter@rca.org)

---

**From Randy Kooy, Coordinator-Administrator-Stated Clerk-Treasurer ([rkooy@rca.org](mailto:rkooy@rca.org)):**

Here are a few links to on-line articles that one may find interesting or helpful:

**Barna studies the research, offers a year-in-review perspective** from Barna Group

<http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/12-faithspirituality/325-barna-studies-the-research-offers-a-year-in-review-perspective>

Based on his company's interviews with thousands of people during the year, researcher George Barna synthesized the findings across numerous studies and summarized four themes that emerged from his research regarding religion in 2009.

**Getting to the Heart of the Matter from The Alban Institute**

<http://www.alban.org/conversation.aspx?id=8865>

As a consultant to congregations, I am often called to work with churches that are stuck. Leaders are aware that something is holding the congregation back from achieving its full potential, but they cannot get a clear enough perspective to figure out what the problems might be. In most situations I

find that the story the congregation is telling about being stuck contains the clues for getting unstuck. Once I hear congregational members tell a story about their situation, I can begin to help them understand how their own narrative scenarios keep them from moving ahead. Within the stories I have collected over the years I have noted three problematic story types that often sit at the heart of stuck congregations.

**Who owns your Christmas carols?** from Christianity Today

[http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/decemberweb-only/152-11.0.html?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+christianitytoday%2Fctmag+\(Christianity+Today+Magazine\)](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/decemberweb-only/152-11.0.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+christianitytoday%2Fctmag+(Christianity+Today+Magazine))

Your church is likely to be singing a licensed Christmas carol this December, thanks to a cycle of convenience, CCM influence, musical skills, and church identity. Today's worship world has a distinct push for new, cheap songs written for a lead singer plus a praise band, rather than the old, free songs written for keyboard instruments and a congregation. Most worship songs from the past 100 years are under copyright.

**How to ask for money** from Leadership Journal

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/thepastor/administration/howtoaskformoney.html>

When asking for large gifts, pastors must lead the way, according to fundraising expert Bill Dillon of PeopleRaising, because they are closest to the vision and most likely to have cultivated relationships with most of the congregation. "There is fear in asking," he says, "but people can learn to ask." Dillon teaches fundraising to missionaries and parachurch leaders, in addition to raising funds for his own ministry. Here are his recommendations.

**How to hire an attorney for your church** from Church Law & Tax Update

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/yc/churchlawtaxupdate/howtohireanattorneyoryourchurch.html>

There are occasions when a church board must hire an attorney. Church leaders often do not know where to begin when faced with the need to hire an attorney. Here are some tips that may help.

**Small blessings: Microchurches growing trend in nation** from WCF Courier

[http://www.wfcourier.com/news/local/article\\_e92a056a-f821-11de-bab0-001cc4c002e0.html](http://www.wfcourier.com/news/local/article_e92a056a-f821-11de-bab0-001cc4c002e0.html)

Microchurches have been around since New Testament days but have become more popular in the past decade. Though the groups differ widely in their practices, the majority serve less than 100 members, typically don't own the building where they meet, often practice nondenominational evangelism and intentionally offer believers a worship atmosphere unlike that of established churches. Many of the groups wish to remain small and will plant a new congregation if numbers grow too large. "People are yearning for a more intimate type of fellowship that they, in many cases, did not find in the very large church," said Carol Childress, founder of FrameWorks, a church consulting firm based in Texas. "In the course of one generation, as a culture here in the United States, we made a 180-degree turn - from valuing strong individuals to searching for a sense of community."

**When the high road hurts** from Ministry Today Magazine

<http://www.ministrytodaymag.com/index.php/ministry-leadership/pastoral-care/18487-when-the-high-road-hurts>

"Pastor, we've decided to move on." These are some of the most difficult words that you, as a ministry leader, will ever hear--especially when they come from people you have lived, laughed and dreamed with. It's painful when we hear that people no longer want to be a part of our ministries. It's additionally painful when they leave and don't take the time to tell us why they're leaving, where they're going, or what we could possibly do to repair any damage in the relationship.

**The culture of youth ministry** from Youth Worker

<http://www.youthworker.com/youth-ministry-resources-ideas/youth-ministry/11624066/>

Obsessed with cool. Trendy. Impulsive. Self-focused. Caught up in the moment. Probably sounds like a description of some of the kids in your youth group. This is an article about us--those of us in the youth ministry culture, those of us who work with teenagers--and how we seem to be sliding into an adolescent approach to our faith and mission. Look at our must-read books, listen to our conversations, go to our seminars and measure our values. Even a quick survey of the current youth ministry culture tells the story: We're not just working with teenagers; we're starting to think like them.

**Schedule:**

January 11 – DeMotte office

12 – Manitoqua office AM; Belhar planning mtg, Stickney PM

- 13 – DeMotte office
- 14 – Chicago/synod event planning team mtg, Lemont
- 15 – DeMotte office
- 18-20 – Commission pastor task force mtg, Chicago
- 20 – Manitoqua office PM
- 21 – DeMotte office
- 22 – DeMotte office
- 23 – Chicago Classis – Belhar mtg, Lemont

The Manitoqua office phone number can more consistently reach me wherever I am as it is usually forwarded to my current location.

**Randy's contact information:**

Manitoqua office: 815-464-9181

DeMotte office: 219-987-6562

Cell phone: 219-730-4873

Email: [rkooy@rca.org](mailto:rkooy@rca.org) or [rkooy@msyn.org](mailto:rkooy@msyn.org)

---

This email newsletter is sent to churches, ministers, and friends of the Synod of Mid-America. To [unsubscribe](#) to this newsletter click [here](#) and send email.

© 2009 Synod of Mid-America, 8122 W. Sauk Trail, Frankfort, IL 60423 – 815-464-9181