
SYNOD OF MID-AMERICA
Reformed Church in America
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2010

<http://www.midamericasynod.org>
<http://msyn.org>

“Healthy classes and congregations through
revitalization and multiplication”



Creating and Weathering the Storm: Hope for Church Leadership – <http://storm.msyn.org>

Register by **April 1** for *Creating and Weathering the Storm: Hope for Church Leadership* to get the **best registration rate!** Early registration is just \$10 per person, but you must make your registration soon. After April 1 the registration will be \$15 per person. Registration deadline is April 19. [Online registration](#) is now available for. Click on the [registration link](#) at <http://storm.msyn.org>. All are invited to attend this equipping event.

Leadership teams that attend will learn what it means to create a storm – why that is good – and how to weather it. Through it all there is **hope for leadership!** This title seemed appropriate to the planning team as the members talked about the content being planned for leadership groups from congregations within our regional synod.



Jim Herrington and Trisha Taylor will be leading church leadership groups around the topics of:

- *Creating continuing change, keeping your cool* - understanding how leaders can create and sustain healthy tension that creates positive change
- *Calm and cool when it all goes crazy* - managing your anxiety within that tension

The sessions will be designed for congregation leadership groups to be better leaders within their congregations. Leaders will be able to take away information and resources to continue the process after the sessions. This can lead to new vision and vitality within churches – and hope for the church leadership!

Jim and Trisha are known to several within our regional synod as they are working extensively and intentionally with five churches in a momentum mobilization revitalization process within those congregations. They will share a healthy taste of this work with all those that participate in the Friday evening and Saturday morning event. One pastor who is involved in this revitalization process said **“We need to start living as Jesus calls his followers to live. [This] process is helping us do that in new ways that call us to deeper levels of authenticity and integrity – and that lead to healing and new life through Jesus Christ.”** The event will be most valuable if several leaders from each church can attend – and great if most of the church’s leadership is there. *Creating and Weathering the Storm* is designed for pastors, elders, deacons, staff, and all other key leaders in our congregations.

Here are the specifics:

- Invitation is for all church leadership of congregations within the Synod of Mid-America
- Dates: Friday evening, April 30, 2010 and Saturday morning, May 1, 2010



- Times: 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM Friday; 8:00 AM – 12:00 noon Saturday – Friday evening meal included!
- Location: Christ Community Church, 13400 Bell Road, Lemont, IL 60439. ([Directions link.](#))
- **Cost: \$10 per person if registered by April 1** - \$15 per person after April 1
- Registration deadline is **April 19**
- [Registration](#) available on line. Alternate paper registration available on [Handout](#).
- **More information at <http://storm.msyn.org>**

Talk about this within your church's leadership. Plan to make this a significant part of your leadership training this year. **A handout to give to your leadership is available at <http://storm.msyn.org/StormHandout.pdf>.** This event is co-sponsored by the Classis of Chicago and the Synod of Mid-America and is open to all. The synod's annual business session for official classis delegates to the synod will be held on the Friday afternoon of the event.

Manitoqua Ministries Work Day is Saturday, April 24

The seventh annual Camp Work Days at Camp Manitoqua and King's Camp are quickly approaching and once again Manitoqua staff is excited about this event that prepares the grounds for the spring and summer retreat and camping programs! Each year God faithfully provides so many people that join together in accomplishing projects. This year's event is scheduled on the same day at both Camp Manitoqua and King's Camp; it is **Saturday, April 24, 2010 from 9:00 am - 2:30 pm**. Lunch and child care are provided at no cost! Churches, community members, youth and adults will join with camp staff to prepare the grounds for the spring and summer retreat and camping programs.

- Would you be willing to organize a team from your church?
- Would you be willing to share with your church the information about the work day – inviting them to participate in the ministry of Manitoqua?

For planning purposes Manitoqua asks that you let them know you are coming; the RSVP deadline is April 13th. For questions and to RSVP contact Leah Meskis (815-469-2319 or leah@manitoqua.org). Also additional information at: <http://www.manitoqua.org/Brix?pageID=8258>



Manitoqua Now Taking Summer Reservations

Camp Manitoqua is now accepting registrations for summer camp! Kids from preschool through high school can experience summer fun in day camps and overnight camps where they will form new friendships, learn more about Jesus, and have a spectacularly fun experience. Call the Manitoqua office at 815-469-2319 or visit the website www.manitoqua.org for more information.

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

Prayers for Holy Week and Easter Services

As holy week is upon us, prayer for the special services of the week and for the Easter celebration is important. During this week, as we prepare to celebrate our risen Lord, pray diligently for the many people involved and participating in this special time. Look at the [Prayers for Holy Week and Easter Services](#) prayer suggestion guide as a tool to help: <http://msyn.org/pdf2/HolyWeek-EasterServices.pdf>

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

The March issue of the Synod of Mid-America prayer focus tool, Intercessors Unite, is available on line. It is a tool to help us as a synod focus our prayers on our common concerns. **This issue requests prayer as churches and pastors prepare for Easter; and lists prayer requests received from classes and congregations.** You are asked to click on [Intercessors Unite](#) and pray the prayer agenda listed for the month of February. To find **our regional synod's prayer tool** follow this link: <http://intunite.msyn.org/IU201003.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.

H.O.P.E. Prayerline

The Prayerline issue for March focuses on inviting intercessors and prayer leaders to grow in prayer. "Opportunities arise every day for us to stand in the gap for people, events, governments, and more.



There is never a shortage of prayer needs, but we need not be overwhelmed with this need. Rather, we can be encouraged and strengthened." This month's issue of the [HOPE \(Houses of Prayer Equipping\) Prayerline](http://www.rca.org/Page.aspx?pid=6371) newsletter can be found at this link: <http://www.rca.org/Page.aspx?pid=6371>. Here are some articles in this month's issue:

- Loving Others through Prayer: Kathy Bruins explains how intercessory prayer is a way of showing God's love to others.
- If My People: Don Pedal expresses the importance of intercessory prayer on behalf of your country.
- Book Review: Becoming a Praying Congregation, by Rueben P. Job

Youth Ministry Section – please use *and* forward this information to those in your church who are working with youth

Connection Tool for Youth Leaders Available

Youth leaders and workers from throughout the Synod of Mid-America are invited to use the Classis of Illinois discipleship weblog (blog) website. It is titled [Illinois Discipleship's Weblog](http://illinoisdiscipleship.wordpress.com/). It is a tool for connection and interaction in discipleship especially pertaining to youth ministry. The classis discipleship team is inviting and encouraging all to use this website. The blog moderator, Brad Vander Waal (Second Reformed, Pekin, IL) said, "I think if we can get people who are not quite so familiar with blogs and the internet just a little bit interested then maybe they will see the benefit of staying in contact with others in denomination. For example, the sharing of resources, the advertising of events and maybe most importantly the support of others who are in similar situations. Our goal as a team is really to try and help the volunteers in churches who are struggling with knowing what to do with their youth group/small group." Check out the blog at <http://illinoisdiscipleship.wordpress.com/> and ask a question, leave a comment, and/or respond to what you see there.

Mission Trip Opportunities for Youth

If you are still looking for mission opportunities for your students, there are still options available through Eaglecrest Student Ministries. Mission trip dates are available for opportunities in Brooklyn, NY, Benton Harbor, MI and Alaska. Eaglecrest Student Ministries has been serving youth ministries in the Great Lakes Synod of the RCA for 15 years. Call Eaglecrest at 616-748-6067 or Kel Blom at 616-4546-0490 (kel@inciteleadership.org) if you need more information. Check out the website at <http://eyms.org/>.

Celebration Stories

The celebration story in this issue highlights the summer day camp at Camp Manitoqua. Manitoqua has been offering day camp to the Frankfort area for thirty years. This is a great outreach ministry of our synod into this community reaching youth in this unique setting. Manitoqua staff person, Eric Bailey, recently put together an article for local Frankfort newspapers. It ran in the Lincoln-Way Sun and The Frankfort Station. We print it for you here:

The grounds of Camp Manitoqua are more than just 65 acres of land. They are a forest of memories for Frankfort residents, designed as a path toward a brighter future for those from Frankfort and beyond. This year, the camp celebrates an anniversary of the manifestation of that goal, as its founders recognize 30 years of summer day camps hosted there.



Manitoqua and its retreat center have been a Frankfort fixture on Sauk Trail for more than 50 years, but it was not until the summer of 1980 that the site began offering a day camp program to local families.

"When Manitoqua was founded in 1957, this was just a cabin camp for church kids in our denomination, the Reformed Church in America," said Executive Director Laura Vroom. "But it was soon recognized that with such a unique campground location,

nestled right in the growing town of Frankfort, they could also offer day camp programming to the surrounding community."

Now, Manitoqua provides day camp options for hundreds of families in Frankfort and surrounding towns every summer. Some are longtime visitors who come back year after year; others just attend specific programs. For others still, the camp is a kind host to those who need childcare while the kids are out of school in the summer.



Currently, the camp offers two day camp options, Journey and Explorer. Journey Day Camp lasts all 10 weeks of the summer session, while Explorer Day Camp is for one to five different weeks throughout.

Registration for this year's camp began Feb. 1.

"We are so grateful to have been able to be a part of the Frankfort landscape for so long, and to operate a successful day camp program for 30 years," Vroom said. "We hope to be here for the next 30 as well."

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.

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

Good News Opportunities...

The next two weeks are a great time to tell other people about what Jesus has done in our personal lives. It is our privilege to share the Good News with a needy world. Jesus wants us to invite those who do not have a relationship with Him to experience the joy of knowing Him. In the church our task is to "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel"—beginning where we are. Maybe you have heard the saying: "The church that does not evangelize will eventually fossilize!" Well, how can we do outreach that actually works, and honors Jesus in the process? Here are four helpful ideas to help reach a disconnected community.

1. On the Arm of a Trusted Friend

The statistics bear it out again and again: if a non-Christian is going to visit a church for the first time, it will be on the arm of a trusted friend. A survey conducted by the Barna group found that 71 percent of Christians from the Buster generation listed an individual as key in their decision to accept Jesus Christ. Thirty-three percent described an instance in which their friend or family member took them to a church service. And only 1 percent said they accepted Jesus because of a tract, radio or television. These upcoming Sundays—Palm Sunday and Easter weekends afford us a great opportunity to invite family and friends to hear the story of Jesus.

2. A Long-term Approach

The decision to follow Christ is not usually a sudden change, but is most often a gradual transformation. People want to investigate the church, Christianity, and other Christians before they make a commitment to Jesus. Therefore, the church needs to function as a sort of “discovery room” where people can be comfortable observing and learning without feeling pressured to “buy.” Churches should create a sort of environment where people who are not yet completely sold on Jesus can participate and have their questions answered. This means there will be people worshipping in our churches whose lives do not necessarily look Christian. But where else would we want them to be?

3. Opening Doors, not Building Barriers.

Another Barna survey has revealed that some “mass evangelism” efforts create three to ten times as much negative response as positive. Those who organize these efforts can point to the people who have made a commitment to Jesus and claim that “if even one person was saved” it was worth doing. But one has to wonder what happens to the many more people who were moved farther away from Christ because of the outreach. We have to be mindful of the “collateral damage” some efforts to evangelize can cause. The Bible tells us that the message of the gospel can be offensive to some, but that doesn’t mean we should deliberately set out to offend.

4. Because We Care.

Finally, we must be careful of our motivation in outreach. Are we trying to win people to Jesus so that we can point to greater numbers at church, or is it because we truly care about them and want them to experience the joy we have in Christ? Efforts at outreach must demonstrate love for people no matter what their behavior or how they choose to respond. God’s love is demonstrated to us like this: “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8) We must always remember that those outside of the church are not enemies to be defeated, but “fellow beggars” in need of living bread. *“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.”* II Corinthians 5:20

Wayne Van Regenmorter

Schedule:

March 22: Meeting/First Reformed Church/South Holland, IL
Meeting/Orland Park, IL
23: Office
24: Network meeting/Baileyville Reformed Church/Baileyville, IL
25: New Beginnings Meeting/Indianapolis, IN
26: Office
27: Off
28: Palm Sunday worship
29: Office
30: Coaching/Conference Call
31: Ridder Initiative Design Meeting/Grand Rapids, MI
April 1: Office
2: Good Friday--Off
3: Off
4: Easter/Resurrection Sunday

Wayne’s contact information:

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

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

Giving tech its due from Your Church

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/yc/2010/spring/givingtechitsdue.html>

For most churches, Information Technology (IT) is a critical part of ministry. Computers that function correctly, a website that looks professional, and a backup process for sermon notes all help the staff do ministry more effectively, communicate with the congregation, and focus on building relationships. The tough question is not, Do we need IT?, because most everyone agrees computer technology is important. Instead, for most church leaders, the question is this: How do you budget for IT equipment, taking into account what is really important for the ministry?

Engaging missions via social media from Youth Worker

<http://www.youthworker.com/youth-camps-missions/11627154/>

One area in which individuals involved in mission trips historically have struggled is the reentry experience. It's hard to share the stories afterward and recapture the experience during a short explanation in front of a congregation. With social media, a new paradigm has been created that is perfectly suited for missions. The experiences and stories can be told as they occur, which actively engages the congregation, friends and family while the team is physically still on the trip.

3 ways to handle problem people from Leadership Journal

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/communitylife/discipleship/3wayhandlepeople.html>

If your church has adult small groups, chances are the people in those groups are not passing "do-you-like-me?" notes or punching the people next to them. But there's a good chance that some or all of the groups have problem people. Whether you would like for folks to stop or start certain behaviors, there are three major approaches that can be effective in small group settings.

Paint and praise in worship from Houston Chronicle

<http://www.chron.com/channel/houstonbelief/photogallery/adoreworship.html>

The Houston Chronicle recently featured a photo gallery of a nontraditional ministry in the Houston area that puts a contemporary spin on a Catholic service. Scott Erickson, the artist-in-residence at Ecclesia (a nondenominational church in Montrose, Texas), teamed up with Ennie Hickman, a Catholic lay leader with Adore Ministries, for a loud, colorful worship service at the Catholic Charismatic Center. *[Note: Click through the photo gallery on this one to read the story contained in the captions.]*

Top six tax mistakes made by ministers from LifeWay

<http://www.lifeway.com/article/170157/>

According to the Internal Revenue Service, ministers are unique. Sometimes, church members and other individuals incorrectly assume ministers pay fewer taxes than the average tax payers. This is an incorrect assumption. Generally, ministers actually pay more taxes than the average tax payers. If the church does not handle its ministerial taxes correctly, the mistakes could cost the church and minister a lot of additional money and headaches. Here are some of the common tax mistakes often made by churches and ministers.

How do you get clear about financial stewardship? from Church Central

<http://www.churchcentral.com/blog/How-Do-You-Get-Clear-about-Financial-Stewardship?>

What do you think about financial stewardship? While there are a host of resources for churches on developing their giving, it's important to clarify your own thinking. The clearer you are yourself, the easier it will be for you to offer others a challenge to give. Here are some questions to ask yourself. Don't ask them of others until you've done some thinking for yourself. As you clarify your own thinking, consider how you want to share it with the congregation.

Schedule:

March 22 – DeMotte office
23 – DeMotte office

24 – Manitoqua office; Youth resources mtg PM
25 – DeMotte office
26 – DeMotte office
29 – DeMotte office
30 – DeMotte office
31 – Manitoqua office
April 1 – DeMotte office
2 – Good Friday

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:

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DeMotte office: 219-987-6562

Cell phone: 219-730-4873

Email: rkooy@rca.org or 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.

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