

---

**SYNOD OF MID-AMERICA**  
**Reformed Church in America**  
**NEWSLETTER - - - Volume 11, Number 8 - - - April 19, 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>**

**You can still register today and even tomorrow** for the **Creating and Weathering the Storm: Hope for Church Leadership** event. Visit the registration site at [http://storm.msyn.org/index\\_files/StormRegistration.htm](http://storm.msyn.org/index_files/StormRegistration.htm) or you can email ([rkooy@rca.org](mailto:rkooy@rca.org)) or call 815-464-9181. Even if you find that there are some who are able to attend beyond these dates, it is possible that they may be included. Contact Randy Kooy to check on availability ([rkooy@rca.org](mailto:rkooy@rca.org) or 815-464-9181). We do not want to leave anyone out.

The information that follows repeats what you have likely previously read in this newsletter and is printed for your review:



**Event 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: \$15 per person**
- Registration deadline is **April 19 (but check for late registration availability)**
- A [handout](#) is available at <http://storm.msyn.org/StormHandout.pdf>
- **More information at <http://storm.msyn.org>**

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.

*Note to official classis delegates to the Synod of Mid-America annual session:* The synod’s annual business session for official classis delegates to the synod will be held beginning at 2:30 PM, Friday, April 30 at Christ Community Church in Lemont, IL. You should have received your official notice and agendas for the meeting – if not contact Randy Kooy ([rkooy@rca.org](mailto:rkooy@rca.org)).

---

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

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

The April 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 for those who are hurting and struggling through a tough time; and lists prayer requests received from church plants, 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/IU201004.htm>; there are also links from the synod’s home page and resources page (<http://msyn.org>).

**New Prayer Resource**

A new resource has been added to the synod’s prayer resources: [Steps to Powerful Prayer](#). This resource gives what its title suggests: steps to make your prayers powerful. It can be found on the synod’s Resources webpage: [http://msyn.org/index\\_files/resources.htm](http://msyn.org/index_files/resources.htm).

**RCA HOPE Prayerline**

The April issue of the RCA HOPE Prayerline is now available. It can be found at <http://www.rca.org/Page.aspx?pid=6525>. Its title this month is *Inviting Intercessors and Prayer Leaders to Grow in Prayer*. “The season of the resurrection of Jesus is a time of spiritual newness. In prayer, there are always new ways to relate to God. Our prayer time doesn’t need to be stale and routine; it can be vibrant and alive. God loves to share these times with us. His Spirit will take whatever we offer God in quiet time or corporate prayer time and bring it to a new level where we will be changed as we are brought closer to the throne of grace.” Specific articles include:

- Do I Love God?--David Muyskens tells how his knowledge of God's love helped deepen his own love for God.
- Restorative Healing Prayer Ministry--Kathy Seif shares how her church responds to prayer needs in the congregation.
- Prayer Experiences at Hagar Park--Sherwin Weener explains how a recent retreat led many members of his church to renew their commitment to Christ through prayer.

---

**News of Churches, Classes, Pastors**

The Rev. Frank Shearer, a former minister within the Synod of Mid-America, died on April 11, 2010 at age 73. He began and ended his active ministry at regional synod churches beginning at the Reformed Community Church (at that time the Calvary Reformed Church) of Venice, Florida where he was the founding pastor and retiring after serving at First Reformed Church of DeMotte, Indiana. His wife Ann survives and lives in Holland, Michigan.

---

**Job Opportunities at Manitouqua**

Camp Manitouqua & Retreat Center is currently hiring and accepting resumes for the following three full-time positions: **Program Coordinator, Outdoor Education Coordinator, and Food Service Coordinator.** Resumes will be accepted until May 15, 2010. All three positions are full-



time with benefits. The Program Coordinator is primarily responsible for the summer program. The Outdoor Education Coordinator oversees the ropes course and nature studies program. The Food Service Coordinator manages the dining experience of all guests and campers. Job descriptions are available on the Manitoqua website: <http://www.manitoqua.org>, under the *Forms* link, specifically here: <http://www.manitoqua.org/Brix?pageID=23552>. If interested, please prayerfully submit your resume to [leah@manitoqua.org](mailto:leah@manitoqua.org) or call the Manitoqua office with questions at 815-469-2319

### **Manitoqua Still Taking Summer Reservations**

Camp Manitoqua continues to accept 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](http://www.manitoqua.org) for more information.

---

### **Celebration Stories**

Celebration stories from the Synod of Mid-America can be found in the new [RCA Today](#) that was recently mailed. Check out the center pages to find these stories:



#### **[New Wisconsin Church Meets People Where They Live](#)**

"I share the gospel as appropriate; sometimes I let people know they don't have to clean up their lives before they come to church," says church planter Jon Nienhuis.

#### **[Online Network Enriches Men's Group](#)**

Men of Faith, the men's ministry at Faith Church in Dyer, Indiana, has gained a new dimension over the past year: online networking.

#### **[Church Members Learn "Simple Act of Serving"](#)**

After an unusually short worship service at Community Reformed Church in Lafayette, Indiana, in October, about 150 people from the congregation set out to bless the community.

#### **[Community Garden Keeps Food Pantry Shelves Full](#)**

"I turned to my friend and told him I wanted to plant a huge garden on the acreage adjacent to our home and give all the produce to the area food pantries," Allen says. "My wife looked at me in shock because all I had ever done in our little family garden was complain about the weeds!"

You can find all these stories online at: <http://www.rca.org/Page.aspx?pid=6468>

-----

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)):**

### ***Running the Race—Be Encouraged...***

It was on August 7, 1954, during the British Empire and Commonwealth Games in Vancouver, B.C. that Roger Bannister and John Landy met for the first time for the 1 mile run. Both men had beaten the 4 minute mark previously. Bannister was the first man to break the 4 minute mile and Landy was the current record holder. As 35,000 fans looked on, no one knew what would take place on that historic day. It would later be known as the "miracle mile." With only 90 yards to go, John Landy glanced over his left shoulder. At that instant, Bannister streaked by on Landy's right to win in a time of 3:58:8. Landy's second place finish of 3:59.6 marked the first time the 4 minute mile had been broken by two runners in the same race. The tragic mistake that John Landy made was to glance over his shoulder to see where his competitor was. In that one instant, taking his eyes off the goal, losing his focus, Bannister

shot by and won the race. There was a tiny fatal lapse of concentration on Landy's part that cost him the race.

John Landy's lapse serves as a modern visualization of what the writer of Hebrews implicitly warns against. We cannot afford even a momentary lapse of focus and attention. Those who look away from Jesus will never finish well. We must not take our eyes off Him. Hebrews 2:2 says, "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith." We are called here to reflect and focus on the person of Jesus. He is the focus because he serves as the perfect example – dependence on the Father for everything. His entire earthly life was the very embodiment of trust in God. He lived in constant dependence on the Father. Jesus never made a decision, never uttered a word, never made a move, without consulting with His Father. It was Jesus' total focus and dependence on the Father that enabled Him to go through the mocking, crucifixion, rejection, and desertion in his life. There is no model, no authority better equipped to encourage us in our life.

What is it in our lives or in the church that draws us away from Jesus? When we're involved in ministry, we live in a world of distractions. Is it the voices that say "please me" instead of pleasing the audience of one—our Heavenly Father? Is it the voices of church members who say, "serve me first" and then if you have time extend care to those who have not yet heard the message of the grace and love of Jesus? Is it our busyness with the urgent and not taking the time to daily reflect on God's Word to hear His voice speak into our lives? Is it because we are burned out in ministry or just simply bored? Are we afraid to connect authentically with each other? Are we willing to say "what is so" in our lives and in our churches in order to discover new ways of renewal and revitalization? Often it is thinking about that event that is happening next that distracts us from what we are doing now. More often than not, we become too easily distracted by the stuff of life and we miss the important stuff that is right before us.

The Hebrew writer says, when we stay focused on Jesus who has gone before us; when we hear the voices of encouragement from those around us who have also been running; when we hear the voices of prayer lifted up before us, then our lives will be different. Our encouragement comes from being united with Jesus and being a part of an authentic community of faith. As pastors and leaders, may you be encouraged by those around you as much as you share words of encouragement with others. As we're involved in ministry today, we are in the race of our lives and the focus must remain firm. Paul reminds us "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." (II Corinthians 4:18)

When Jesus called you into ministry, you entered a relationship with Him and He didn't just fire a starting pistol and say, "Okay, now you're on your own." He brought the Holy Spirit to dwell in you. You never run alone. Jesus is your running companion. He runs in front of you to show you the way. He runs by your side to pick you up when you fall or falter, and He comes behind you to encourage you in the race.

Be encouraged!

Wayne Van Regenmorter

### **Schedule:**

- April 19: Parenting Session Meeting/Orlando FL
  - Parenting Training Meeting
  - Meeting with Mike Khanijan
  - RCA Parent Training Event/First Baptist Church/Orlando, FL
- 20: U-Turn Meeting/Orlando, FL
  - RCA Parent Training Event/First Baptist Church/Orlando, FL
  - Exponential Conference Begins/Orlando, FL
- 21-22: Exponential Conference/Orlando, FL
  - 22: Field Assessment/Christiana de Orlando/Kissimmee, FL
  - 23: Field Assessment/Living Stone Church/New Tampa, FL
  - 24: Travel
  - 25: Sunday Worship
  - 26: Off
  - 27: Office
  - 28: Network meeting/Baileyville Reformed Church/Baileyville, IL
  - 29: Wisconsin Executive Council Meeting/Fond de Lac, WI

30: Synod of Mid-America Annual Meeting/Christ Community Church/Lemont, IL  
May 1: Synod of Mid-America Annual Meeting/Christ Community Church/Lemont, IL  
2: 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:

**Churches should engage and release their creatives** from Ministry Marketing Coach

<http://ministrymarketingcoach.com/2010/04/07/churches-engage-and-release-your-creatives/>

The term "creatives" has become a common tag for individuals who think outside the box and deliver imaginative results. They are the ones who can't sit still in meetings and who view every napkin as a canvas for their thoughts and ideas. The Web is often the platform where creatives flourish and they tend to be the unsung heroes of a site's visual experience. Churches have begun to identify their value and it is a safe bet that your church or ministry has at least one of these creatives on staff. The odd fact is that many entities don't know how to handle their creative team.

**Planting the church** from Outreach Magazine

<http://www.outreachmagazine.com/features/3600-Planting-the-Church.html>

When sensing God's unique call to plant a church, most pastors are full of dreams about the church and culture they want to cultivate. But even the loftiest dreams are not enough. The task of church planting requires seeking guidance from those who've been there. Outreach sat down with five veteran church planters to discuss what they did right, what they would do differently, and how they walked through the challenges of the first few years.

**Congregational-health expert terms churches 'in crisis'** from Associated Baptist Press

<http://www.abpnews.com/content/view/5016/53/>

During his installation March 18 as president of the Center for Congregational Health, Bill Wilson said churches and ministers are "in crisis." That's a breath-sucking observation from the head of an organization that has dealt with struggling congregations for nearly two decades. "We've got to help congregations figure out how to do church that works," Wilson said during an interview in his office in Winston-Salem, N.C. Wilson said with many churches spinning their wheels in a culture that discounts them because they haven't stayed relevant, "vigilantism" among frustrated members is showing its head.

**Churches wrestle with drop in donations** from Religion News Service via BeliefNet

<http://blog.beliefnet.com/news/2010/04/churches-wrestle-with-drop-in.php>

The number of churches that reported a drop in giving due to the sour economy rose nearly 10 percent last year, according to new survey. In 2009, 38 percent of churches reported a decline in giving, versus 29 percent in 2008. Megachurches -- those with 2,000 members are more -- were hit hardest, with 47 percent reporting a decrease in giving last year, up from 23 percent in 2008.

**Is the meaning of Easter being lost?** from Houston Chronicle

<http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/life/main/6942155.html>

Just as Christmas for many has become less about the miracle of the virgin birth, Easter may be losing its connection to the resurrection. Although the holiday is meant to be the central celebration of the church, disassociating Easter from the biblical narrative of the resurrection or seeing it in symbolic terms makes Christianity "safer" for con-temporary churchgoers, some local Christian leaders say

**What church playgrounds can learn from amusement parks** from Church Executive Magazine

<http://www.churchexecutive.com/article.asp?IndexID=1353>

The goal for amusement parks is to attract guests and increase attendance. Year after year they explore creative approaches and new strategies to bring in visitors. As a result, the amusement industry has had to be on the cutting edge. Churches have something in common with the amusement industry: Both are

relentless in the search for ways to attract people. Amusement parks do it to make money while the church does it to build its ministry and spread its teachings. Here are four successful strategies from the amusement industry that can be integrated into the church to maximize the ministry.

**Schedule:**

April 19 – DeMotte office  
20 – DeMotte office  
21 – Manitoqua office  
22 – DeMotte office  
23 – DeMotte office  
26 – DeMotte office  
27 – Manitoqua office  
28 – DeMotte office  
29 – Wisconsin Classis Exec mtg, Fond du Lac  
30 – Synod annual session; Creating and Weathering the Storm event  
May 1 – Creating and Weathering the Storm event

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.

© 2010 Synod of Mid-America, 8122 W. Sauk Trail, Frankfort, IL 60423 – 815-464-9181