
SYNOD OF MID-AMERICA
Reformed Church in America
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<http://www.midamericasynod.org>
<http://msyn.org>

“Healthy classes and congregations through revitalization and multiplication”

Classis, Church, and Pastor News

- Some of the classes of the Synod of Mid-America have met or will meet for late spring or early summer sessions. Chicago Classis met on May 15 and Wisconsin Classis met on May 20. Illiana Classis will meet on June 17. Some of these meetings have included or will include examinations of candidates under classis care. Remember the classes of the synod in prayer, including their candidates under care, as they do their work.
- Illinois Classis has announced that their Relationship Team has set up an Illinois Classis Facebook page as a means to better be in touch with each other.
- Illiana Classis will have a special classis meeting for the purpose of installing the Rev. Troy Nanninga as associate pastor of American Reformed Church in DeMotte, Indiana. The service of installation will be held on Sunday, June 13, 2010 at 3:30 PM at American-DeMotte. We celebrate with Troy and the church in this new relationship.

Basic classis information can be found by following the links on the classis page of the regional synod's website: http://msyn.org/index_files/classes.htm. Included are quick links to the classes' church's websites. New church links now online are First Reformed of Racine, Wisconsin and Mt. Greenwood Reformed of Chicago.

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

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

The May 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. You are asked to click on [Intercessors Unite](#) and pray the prayer agenda listed for the month of May. To find **our regional synod's prayer tool** follow this link: <http://intunite.msyn.org/IU201005.htm>; there are also links from the synod's home page and resources page (<http://msyn.org>).

RCA HOPE Prayerline

If you have not already seen it, the May issue of the RCA HOPE Prayerline is available. It can be found at <http://www.rca.org/Page.aspx?pid=6538>. “Ahhhhh... spring! Breathe in the freshness of the season and put away all your winter clothes. It is invigorating to stand in the sun and feel the warmth cover you. This is a lot like prayer. Breathe in God's love, mercy, and grace as you pray, and then take off the old clothes of burdens, worries, bitterness, and anything else that is weighing you down. Be invigorated by prayer.” Specific articles include:

- Global Day of Prayer--Kathy Bruins encourages readers to either attend a Global Day of Prayer event in their area or organize one of their own.
 - Psalm 91 Bandanas--Mary Okkema shares a creative way to let servicemen and women know that they are covered in prayer.
 - Bless the Hand that Rocks the Cradle--poetry by David Pekrul
 - Prayer for a Precious Mother--a prayer by Richard Provencher
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Manitowish Still Taking Summer Reservations

Camp Manitowish 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 Manitouqua office at 815-469-2319 or visit the website www.manitouqua.org for more information.

Celebration Stories

The story this issue comes to us from First Reformed Church in Waupun, Wisconsin. Many of their members were involved in faith in action by teams going out into the community on a recent weekend to do "acts of kindness". A local newspaper picked up the story. A taste of the story is here with the entire story available by following this link:

<http://www.fdlreporter.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/201005190427/FON0101/100518125>

Church members put their 'Faith in Action' by Sharon Roznik • The Reporter • May 19, 2010

WAUPUN — "Faith in Action" may come close to solving the eternal "faith versus works" debate once and for all. More than 170 people from First Reformed Church in Waupun headed out this past weekend to do good deeds, no questions asked. There were no crosses or Bible verses anywhere. Workers wore T-shirts that simply read: "A.O.K. Acts of Kindness Team."



"Our acts of kindness are not some attempt to promote our church," said John Nyhuis. "It's about folks who decided that it was time to go outside of the building and help people in need." Teams of workers washed windows, painted houses, cleaned up yard debris, and finished up residents' "honey-do" lists, Nyhuis said.

Kiosks placed throughout the city last month served as collection spots for requests. Needs ran the gamut. "If people need help, we are there," Nyhuis said.

Read the rest of the story here:

<http://www.fdlreporter.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/201005190427/FON0101/100518125>

Since the story ran in the paper, John Nyhuis shared this with us: "I got a phone message from Sue Rauch from St. Joe's [a Catholic church in Waupun] and, after seeing the article in the Reporter, they are apparently interested in partnering with Acts of Kindness in any future projects we come up with. Isn't amazing how God works!"

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 ministry and/or stories of the multiplication of ministries to Randy Kooy at rkooy@rca.org.

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

A Question of Courage...

A week ago about 25 pastors and leaders gathered at Western Seminary in Holland, MI, for a final retreat of Phase 1 of the Ridder Leadership Initiative. Jim Herrington and Trisha Taylor led the group in reviewing the skills learned over the past 18 months and then they talked about the need for leaders to have courage. They shared that by its very nature, leadership requires courage. "Real leadership stirs up anxiety and invites sabotage--and then responds courageously to each. Most of us can trace our failures in leadership to our failures in courage." So we were asked: What would you do if you were not afraid? I wonder, how would you answer that question?

Herrington and Taylor talked about several kinds of courage: the courage to lead, the courage to define yourself, the courage to look bad, the courage to risk acceptance or approval, the courage to fail. Jim said, "The reality is that because leadership stirs up anxiety and invites sabotage, leaders who have a "failure of nerve" cannot lead well. (Edwin Friedman) Systems naturally organize themselves around the anxiety of the least mature member of the system and that leadership requires that the leaders manage self well enough to take that on. Suffering is a natural and inescapable part of a leader's life."

Courage is about being present, real, not faking it. Developing courage is letting go of what people think you should be and boldly showing others who, in reality, you are. Courage begins on the inside. When a difficult situation occurs the first battle is within the leader. It is a battle with personal fears and insecurities. Courage does not mean that a leader is free from feeling fear. However, courage is doing the thing that the leader is afraid to do. It takes courage to move out of the familiar and tread into uncharted territory. Despite fear, courage is the power to move forward.

As you think about your present ministry setting, what is waiting for you that will require you to lead courageously? What has been stopping you from leading courageously up until now? In those places where your life and ministry is not working, do you see a failure of courage?

Ambrose Redmoon got it right when he said: "Courage is not the absence of fear but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear." At the retreat we were asked to answer these questions carefully: In your own life, what is more important than fear? What is it that is important enough to you that you are willing to move toward anxiety, acting courageously as a leader, even with the suffering that goes with that? What is more important to you than your fear? What is more important to you than your patterned, anxious reaction?

I pray that as you and I ponder these questions that we might become stronger leaders who can be used by Jesus Christ to accomplish His mission in this world.

Wayne Van Regenmorter

Schedule

May 24: Coaching

25: Office

26: Meeting/Heartland Community Church, Lafayette, IN

27: New Wave Network Conference Call

28: Office

29: Off

30: Sunday Worship

31: Memorial Day

June 1: Meeting/Chicago, IL

2: Meeting/Orland Park, IL

3: Office

4: Ridder Phase 2 Meeting/South Holland, IL

5: Florida Classis Administrative Council Conference Call

6: Sunday Worship

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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:

Study: American 'Millennials' value family most from The Christian Post

<http://www.christianpost.com/article/20100511/study-finds-american-millennials-value-family-most/index.html>

When asked what's important in life, most American "Millennials" – those born between 1980 and 1991 – say family comes first, ahead of friends, education, careers and even religion. That's the finding of LifeWay Research based on a wide-ranging August 2009 survey of 1,200 Millennials in the United States. The study forms the basis for the upcoming book "The Millennials: Connecting to America's Largest Generation" by Dr. Thom Rainer and his son Jess Rainer.

Growing church opts for tele-communion from News & Observer

<http://www.newsobserver.com/2010/05/10/475442/growing-church-opts-for-tele-communion.html>

A new church was born Sunday morning, but, like an increasing number of congregations, it has no preaching pastor. In what has become one of the most popular church growth methods across the country, a large white screen unfurled in front of the stage with the preacher's image projected on it, preempting the live sermon and the pastor's physical presence. Welcome to the satellite church, a 21st century phenomenon that owes its success to advances in technology. These days, instead of starting new congregations, churches are reproducing the successful ones, franchise-style.

Why I finally joined a church from Salon

http://www.salon.com/life/feature/2010/04/25/family_joins_church

I was a religious skeptic who bristled at joining a community. But two things changed that: My kids. Our family just joined a church. This may not sound like a radical statement -- not here in America, arguably the churchiest nation in the world. But hearing these words from my own mouth feels about as natural as, "I've just joined the Marines."

Setting the Welcome Thermostat from The Alban Institute

<http://www.alban.org/conversation.aspx?id=9067>

On the cubicle where she works all day, Abby pinned a picture of a church. Where many would keep a photo of family members or beloved pets, Abby has an image of a brownstone building on the Cambridge Common, and she looks at it whenever she feels anxious or unmoored. First Church in Cambridge is, in many ways, a typical mainline congregation. What makes the church truly different from many of its peers is not just that it is growing—many churches do that—but the demographic category that is growing most quickly: Post-collegiate adults in their 20s and 30s. At one New Member Sunday in early 2008, out of 30 new members, 27 were under the age of 35. What is their secret?

From clergy shortage to clergy glut from Religion News Service via The Pew Forum

<http://pewforum.org/Religion-News/From-clergy-shortage-to-clergy-glut.aspx>

After a decade-long clergy shortage in America's pulpits, Christian denominations are now experiencing a clergy glut -- with some denominations reporting two ministers for every vacant pulpit. "We have a serious surplus of ministers and candidates seeking calls," said Marcia Myers, director of the vocation office for the Presbyterian Church (USA), which has four ministers for every opening. The cause of the sudden turnaround: blame the bad economy.

Death by meeting from Building Church Leaders

http://buildingchurchleaders.com/articles/2010/deathbymeeting.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+buildingchurchleaders+%28BuildingChurchLeaders.com%29

In his book *Death by Meeting*, Patrick Lencioni highlights two problems with meetings. Although he writes about meetings in the business world, the author of this article believes much of what he says can apply to elders' meetings, church staff meetings, worship committee meetings, or any other type of meeting. The first problem is this: meetings are boring. And the second is like it: meetings are ineffective. Meetings, says Lencioni, are boring because they lack drama. They are ineffective because they lack contextual structure.

Five Golden Rules of church finance management from LifeWay

<http://www.lifeway.com/article/170253/>

Almost every day the news tells of another corruption scandal. Corruption in America has become so commonplace that many Americans are now assuming even some of the most trusted institutions are corrupt. The church is not lost in this growing lack of trust in the American society. The church must take an active role to overcome this common feeling among nonbelievers and church members. In today's culture, the church cannot afford to be reactive, but the church must be proactive in managing its finances above reproach. The following golden rules should exist in a fellowship to help counterbalance today's culture of mistrust regarding the management of church finances.

Preventing church volunteer burnout from Church Executive Magazine

<http://churchexecutive.com/archives/preventing-church-volunteer-burnout>

Too often, church volunteers burn out while in the trenches of servanthood. In churches where there is always a ministry to tend, a committee to lead, a class to teach or an event to chair, it is hard to find people willing to step up to the plate. When you find them, it is even harder on the church to lose them, especially if they are doing a good job.

Schedule:

May 24 – DeMotte office
25 – DeMotte office
26 – Manitoqua office
27 – DeMotte office
28 – DeMotte office
31 – Memorial Day
June 1 – SIM mtg – Manitoqua AM; Staff mtg PM; Manitoqua Board mtg evening
2 – DeMotte office
3 – DeMotte office AM; WI Search Team, Oostburg PM
4 – Travel; Off
5 – Florida Adm Council conf call mtg AM

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

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