
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”

Wisconsin Classis Begins Search for Classis Leader

At the March 2010 meeting of the Classis of Wisconsin, the classis approved moving ahead with a new classis structure. One element of that new structure is the hiring of a full-time Classis Leader. A Search Team has been appointed and they have begun the search process. The team is looking for suggestions of names of persons who might be a fit and have the gifts and skills for the position. More information about suggesting persons or applying, including a description of the position, can be found online at <http://wisc.msyn.org>.

Urban Ministries Contributions Are Appreciated

The Synod of Mid-America has an asking for its churches to contribute to the Urban Ministries Fund. The money in this fund is distributed to ministries within the urban areas of the regional synod. It is a chance for all of the synod churches to share in important ministries in our city neighborhoods. Without these contributions many ministries would find it difficult or impossible to continue. **“Thank you”** to those churches who have contributed to the Urban Ministries fund this year or who have plans and/or are budgeted to contribute this year. It is because of your faithful contributions that ministries in urban settings can happen! This year ministries in Chicago, Milwaukee, Miami, and Sheboygan are being helped. Churches currently not contributing are urged to consider helping fund urban ministries. Over the past few years contributions have declined. The synod asks that churches contribute \$4 for each member (plus there is a \$2 per Sunday school member), but any contribution is appreciated. **[Please pass along this information to the consistory, board of deacons, benevolent committee, or whatever group in your church makes decisions about funding ministries such as this.]**

RCA Email Not Working During Weekend

The rca.org email system was “down” for a time over this past weekend. If you emailed anything to Randy Kooy or Wayne Van Regenmorter using their rca.org email address in the last couple days and/or have not received an expected response, please re-send it. As of late Sunday it has been back working.

Pastoral Care Specialist Program

Journey, Center for the Church’s Learning at Western Seminary is sponsoring a pastoral care specialist program. This program is designed for pastors and lay pastoral caregivers who desire to enhance their pastoral care and counseling skills for ministry within the parish context. More information can be found at: <http://www.westernsem.edu/explore/programs/journey/calendar/pcs>

Prayer Section of Synod Newsletter Ends – at Least Temporarily

For the past couple of years this newsletter has contained a prayer section, and since February 2009 a link for prayer teams was provided to an online Synod of Mid-America communication for prayer:

Intercessors Unite. This communication sought to bring us together in common prayer for the praises and concerns of our congregations, ministers, classes, and others in the RCA. The *Intercessors Unite* page has been discontinued – at least for now. There are a number of reasons for this; included is the fact that our volunteer Prayer Team Leader for the Regional Synod, Diane Aardema, has decided to concentrate her efforts and ministry in other areas. The Synod appreciates Diane’s leadership in prayer over the last few years – **“thank you, Diane”**.

Additionally in this section, links have been provided to the RCA H.O.P.E. Prayerline. The H.O.P.E. team is in a time of transition with the look to the future on how it may be reconstituted. But for now, it appears that those links will not be available.

The prayer resources on the Regional Synod website will remain (http://msyn.org/index_files/resources.htm).

Celebration Stories

There is no story this issue. Submit your story of what is happening in your congregation so that we can celebrate together!

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):

Tips for Administrative Leadership...

Administration is listed as one of the spiritual gifts in I Corinthians 12:28. The Greek term used here is "*kubernesis*" which is the word for helmsman. Just as a helmsman steers the ship through smooth and dangerous waters and follows a prescribed course, so a pastor or church staff person serves in an administrative role to help guide a congregation in pursuit of their unique mission. The helmsman understands the ship. Often in a sailing vessel there are many variables that in combination could spell disaster to the ship. Winds, tides, currents, shoals, weather, and crew can create a recipe for disaster for the ungifted. Pastors, like experienced helmsman, must respond to the combination of conditions that challenge the progress of a congregation.

Margaret Marcuson wrote an article entitled "*Ten Tips of Administrative Leadership at Church*" that I have found to be very helpful. Quoted here is her list:

1. **Make** sure you are reliable. If you say you will do something do it. Your credibility as a leader will be enhanced, and the ministry as a whole will benefit.
2. **Keep** your time from being eaten up by the details of administration. Everyone has a different tolerance for these tasks but you will find it hard to lead effectively if you are spending your time proofreading the newsletter. Find someone else to do these detailed tasks!
3. **Exercise** the ministry of delegation. Others will grow as you are able to let go. Even if you are a fabulous administrator and love it, find ways to involve other people.
4. **Understand** the difference between leading and managing. Both are essential and they are not the same thing. Know your own strengths in these two key areas and find others who can complement you.
5. **Remember** that the best leaders surround themselves with people who are better at certain tasks than they are. Don't hesitate to do this in all areas of church life, and especially this one.
6. **Know** your own rhythm of work. One of the blessings of ministry can be the great freedom around setting your schedule.
7. **Set** limits for meetings. They expand to fill the time allotted.
8. **Respect** the challenge of change in this as in all other areas. For example, long-time administrative assistants are a very important part of the system. If you need to make a change here recognize that there will be waves and prepare for them.
9. **Bear in mind** the emotional aspects of time management. It's not just about setting priorities and making lists. Just working harder and trying harder is not the answer to every problem—sometimes letting things sit is the better part of valor.
10. **Ask** for help when you need it, whether you struggle in this area or feel overwhelmed by the sheer volume of paper or e-mail.

The vision to perceive God's preferred future must be combined with the wisdom, determination, and skills to affect that preferred future. Just having vision is not enough; many have the vision and can understand the consequences of their actions, but do not have the will or the spiritual fortitude to implement those actions. Effective administrative leadership combines vision with practical planning, the courage to implement, the skills to apply effective solutions, and the endurance to see objectives reached. These things are all crucial and must be subordinate to the intervention of the Holy Spirit. May our administrative leadership skills have a kingdom impact on the congregations and communities we serve.

Wayne Van Regenmorter

Schedule:

June 7: Conference call, office
8: Meeting Christian Park Church, Indianapolis, IN
9: Office, Indiana meetings
10-15: General Synod, Northwestern College, Orange City, IA
16: Office
17: Illiana Classis Meeting, Heartland Community Church, Lafayette, IN
18: Wisconsin Transition Team Meeting, Fond du Lac, WI
19: Off
20: Sunday Worship

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

What follows below are a few links to on-line articles that one may find interesting or helpful.

Rev. Mackay's Dilemmas from Alban Institute

<http://alban.org/conversation.aspx?id=9093>

In his office one afternoon, Rev. Mackay heard the confession of John Jones, a longtime and beloved member of the church. John told his pastor that he had recently pled guilty to charges of molesting his 12-year-old niece. What should Rev. Mackay do with this information about John? Every congregation faces decisions about how to manage sensitive information, and some congregations have to make difficult decisions in the midst of crises. Highly stressful situations rarely bring out the best in anyone. Faith leaders can practice making difficult decisions wisely now—instead of waiting until a congregational predicament forces them to become instant specialists at information management.

Total US churches no longer in decline, researchers say from The Christian Post

<http://www.christianpost.com/article/20100513/total-us-churches-no-longer-in-decline-researchers-say/index.html>

We often hear about churches closing their doors in the U.S. But some may be surprised to hear that the total number of churches is not in decline anymore. An important shift happened in recent years, according to researchers Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird. After decades of net decline, more U.S. churches are being started each year than are being closed. The credit largely goes to the recent increase in enthusiasm for church planting. Stetzer, who leads LifeWay Research, says church planting has become the "it" thing right now and the new evangelism.

Pastors urged to put the ha in hallelujah from The Tennessean via USA Today

http://www.usatoday.com/news/religion/2010-05-23-comedy-preacher_N.htm

For everything, there is a season, says the book of Ecclesiastes. A time to be born, a time to die. A time to love and a time to hate. And definitely a time to laugh. That's the message the Rev. Susan Sparks has for her fellow preachers. That passage also says that there's a time to weep — but that's where too many

preachers stop, said Sparks, a former trial lawyer turned American Baptist preacher and stand-up comic. "I think we've erred too much on the weeping side," she said.

Pastor lost tongue to cancer but finds adversity helps him connect with his flock from St. Louis Dispatch

<http://www.stltoday.com/stltoday/news/stories.nsf/religion/story/133D99DAB6A4961D86257727007FA254?OpenDocument>

The Rev. Scott Schmieding sat in an examination room at the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston where a surgeon had just examined a malignant tumor in the center of his tongue. The tumor was spreading rapidly, the doctor told him. Surgeons would have to remove most, if not all, of the preacher's tongue, and he might never be able to swallow on his own. His speech would likely be unintelligible. In that moment, Schmieding was not afraid of death or the physical ordeal that he faced. He knew heaven awaited him if he were to die. But he wondered about his calling if he survived. How could he spread the word of God if he couldn't speak?

Churches reach out to immigrant communities from Ministry Today Magazine

<http://www.ministrytodaymag.com/index.php/ministry-news/65/18917>

Across the country, churches are reaching out to the increasing immigrant communities in their midst as ways to share the gospel and grow. Whether it is immigrants from Latin America, Muslims or Hindus from the Middle East or Asia, or refugees from troubled nations, many congregations are seeing a huge need and working to meet it.

What's in your small group? from Church Central

<http://www.churchcentral.com/blog/What%27s-in-your-small-group?>

Perhaps you have seen or heard the credit card commercial that ends with the question, "What's in your wallet?" The inference is that the credit card in question is superior to others, so you should have one in your wallet. As the author of this article meets with leaders of churches, he is asking a question for a different reason: "What's in your small groups or Sunday school classes?" Simply stated, he wants to know if they know what's being taught in these groups.

4 myths about using technology in Church from Leadership Journal

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/currenttrendscolumns/leadershipweekly/4usingtechnology.html>

The Church has used technology throughout history: papyrus, printing press, piano, organ, lighting, microphones, guitars, drums, and video projectors. And with the advent of the Internet, we have newer technologies like websites, social networking via Facebook, and texting on cell phones. How do we steward technology well? We start by dispelling four common myths about using online technologies in the church.

Protect your ministry with an employee handbook from Your Church

http://blog.yourchurch.net/2010/06/protect_your_ministry_with_an.html#more

Every ministry, no matter how small, could benefit from maintaining an employee handbook. A proper handbook defines what you expect from employees and what they can expect from you. By following a few simple tips, your ministry handbook can provide valuable legal protection if your policies are challenged in court.

Schedule:

June 7 – DeMotte office

8-15 – **General Synod and pre-synod meetings**

16 – DeMotte office

17 – Manitoqua office; Illiana Classis mtg PM (Lafayette)

18 – DeMotte office

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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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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