

“Healthy classes and congregations through revitalization and multiplication”

“To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.” – Dr. Martin Luther King

M³: Moving from Maintenance to Mission – Newest Information

The consistories and other key congregation leaders of the churches within the Synod of Mid-America are invited to plan to attend **M³: Moving from Maintenance to Mission**. This event, co-sponsored by the Regional Synod and the Classis of Illiana, will be held **Friday-Saturday, April 4-5, 2008 at Calvary Community Church, 16341 South Park Ave., South Holland, IL 60473**. A Friday evening fellowship meal will be followed by resource sessions with the evening ending by 9:00 PM (CST). The Saturday sessions will be in the morning only, ending by noon. The cost of the event will be only **\$10 per person**.



M³: Moving from Maintenance to Mission will be an equipping and motivating event of value for pastors, consistories, and all church leaders. Dr. Paul Borden will be the presenter for the following three sessions:

- **Christian Leadership for a New Century**
- **Congregational Life Cycles**
- **Making Evangelism a Value**

There will be a time to discuss what was heard as well as to ask questions. Included will be inspirational worship and prayer time. It is anticipated that leaders will leave being challenged to more than just doing “church” in the local setting.

To give you an idea of a presentation follow this [link](http://midamericasynod.org/tmp/ChurchLifeCycles.htm) to view the first page of the **Congregational Life Cycles** session handout: <http://midamericasynod.org/tmp/ChurchLifeCycles.htm>. Leadership groups will begin to think about where their congregation is in the cycle and how to break the cycle.

Pastors and consistories are asked to begin now to plan to attend this event. Talk about this opportunity in your meetings and add the dates to calendars. Consider bringing other key influencers from your congregation that may not be a part of your current consistory.

Registration information:

- Church leadership groups and/or individuals will be able to register
- Church groups can register by the number attending from that church
- Registration forms will be available soon – information will be distributed by this newsletter
- For those who might need it, information will be coming about area hotels
- Questions? Contact Randy Kooy (rkooy@rca.org)

M³: Moving from Maintenance to Mission will be held in conjunction with the annual session of the Synod of Mid-America. Delegates will assemble for the business meeting Friday afternoon. It was decided to expand the annual session to more than just business of the Synod and more than just the delegates of the synod can be included. If the event is found to be useful for the Synod, it is the intention to rotate the event among the various classes of the Synod.

Response to Mid-America Flood Victims Requested

In early January eastern Illinois and western Indiana saw a rapid snow melt followed by torrential rains. This resulted in several flooded areas. One of the locations hardest hit is the Watseka, Illinois area which is in the same vicinity as the Danforth Reformed Church. Several extended families of the church were

directly affected by the flooding as well as the greater community. Danforth Reformed and other neighboring Reformed churches are trying to do what they can to help.

They send us this message: "Watseka Flood victims have great needs! We as the East Central Illinois group of Reformed churches are called to be a blessing to the world around us in Christ. It is our aim to build a wall of Christian caring through giving of cases of can food or money donations toward cases of can foods. It will be distributed through the appropriate agencies so that the best care can be given to those who have been affected by the Watseka flood."

Here are a few links to give an idea of what those in the Watseka area have experienced and continue to experience:

<http://www.wgfaradio.com/wordpress/?p=1476>

http://illinoishomepage.net/media_player.php?media_id=6812 (Video story)

<http://www.disasternews.net/news/article.php?articleid=3596>

Churches and individuals are encouraged to be a part of the RCA witness to the community. Monetary contributions can be sent as follows:

Danforth Reformed Church
PO Box 5
Danforth, IL 60930

Checks can be made payable to "Danforth Reformed Church" and marked "Watseka flood aid". If one wishes to donate cases of food, first contact Danforth Reformed pastor, Rev. Donald MacDonald (danforthreformedchurch@yahoo.com or 815-269-2060) who can also be contacted to give more information and answer questions.

One Thing Event Airport/Hotel Transportation

Are you one of the over 75 persons from the Synod of Mid-America going to the one thing event this week? If you don't already have it, here is some information supplied by the RCA about transportation between the airport and the Hyatt Regency Hotel:

- Taxi - \$18 one-way per car. Seating and Luggage: up to 6 (?) passengers / amount of luggage depends on size of bags. Pick Up: Lower level of the airport.
- SA Trans (Airport Shuttles) - \$14 one way. \$24 round trip <http://www.saairportshuttle.com/> A \$2-off coupon is available at the website.

The Hyatt does not have any free airport shuttle. Attendees are responsible for their own transportation between airport and hotel and back. There is a substantial parking fee so rental cars are not recommended.

Illinois Classis Strategic Planning Workshop

The Classis of Illinois is sponsoring a Strategic Planning Workshop for its churches. The classis leadership endorses this workshop as it looks to the future of the classis and individual churches. Here are some details:

- Leader: Mark Baumgarten – experienced in strategic planning for business (John Deere) and has adapted it to the church.
- Who is invited: All Illinois Classis pastors and congregation leadership: consistory members and other key leaders.
- When: Saturday, February 9, 2008, 9:00am – 12:00 noon
- Where: Bethel Reformed Church, Sterling, IL
- RSVP: Ken Zuithoff – kzuithoff@yahoo.com or 815-626-1816

The workshop is adaptable to current church situation. Churches will be helped in taking a good look at where it is now and where it wants to be in the next few years. Churches will be helped in setting realistic goals and guidelines to reaching those goals.

Women's Night of Fellowship and Worship

All women from the Synod of Mid-America are invited to attend a **Women's Night of Fellowship and Worship on Friday, February 1, 2008** from 7:00 pm-9:00 pm (CST) at Crete Reformed Church in Crete, Illinois. This evening will be a time of fellowship, getting to know one another from across our



Synod, but primarily, it will be a time to come together to worship and bring glory to Our Lord and King. What a wonderful way to start the new year. Please join us.

Click the picture to link to the flyer for additional information that you may download, print and hand-out. Alternately you can use the following link: <http://midamericasynod.org/pdf2/womensworshipnite.pdf>

Those receiving this newsletter are encouraged to pass on this information to appropriate persons within your congregation. Perhaps the first paragraph can be used as a bulletin or church newsletter announcement. For more information contact Diane Aardema (daardema@msn.com or 708-935-4504).

Celebration Stories of Revitalization and Multiplication

This section of the newsletter is where we share stories of celebration. There is no story this issue...

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):

The Hungry Being Fed...

The **Vision** of the Synod of Mid-America is classes and congregations made healthy through revitalization and multiplication. What does that look like? In accordance with the RCA's efforts to revitalize and multiply we will see...

- Lives being transformed by the love of Jesus Christ as the lost are found, the hungry are fed, the broken are made whole, hurts are healed, and hope overcomes despair.
- Neighborhoods, villages, towns, and cities becoming healthier, more just, and more gracious for all people as they experience God's expanding realm of grace, mercy, love, and justice.

In sharing our vision we often talk about renewing our existing congregations and starting new ones, but how are the "hungry being fed"? How are we addressing the issue of poverty in the United States? I was inspired by an article that Wes Granberg-Michaelson wrote in a recent "Monday Morning" after he attended a meeting of the Christian Churches Together in the USA. He writes, "We need to understand that the plight of the poor in the U.S. is a moral disgrace. About 37 million people live in poverty in the United States. We're not making the progress we could as a society; in fact, in the past seven or eight years, wealth has been growing faster at higher income levels, widening the gap between rich and poor. Few things are clearer in the Bible than God's unyielding compassion for those who are poor and on the margins of society. The verses of Scripture which reveal God's priority for the poor number literally in the hundreds; some count more than a thousand.

I often thought of our RCA congregations throughout the week. We all want to be faithful to God's Word in our life and witness, but how many actually live out in their life and ministry the call of our God to demonstrate prophetic compassion and work for the justice God desires in our society?...Many RCA congregations understand that following Christ in mission includes reaching out to "the least of these" in the name of Christ. As a result, food and other social outreach programs have grown. But consider this fact that I learned last week: If you take all the food programs organized by churches and religious organizations in the U.S., they equal only 1/20 of the nutritional support that comes from federal programs. And even with all these efforts, 13.5 million households in the U.S. (more than one in 10) lack sufficient income to provide enough food on their tables.

So the justice that God desires requires a combination of personal response, outreach by churches, and action by government. As disciples of Jesus, when we are witnesses to God's love for his world, it leads

us into both the personal involvement and the public action that reflect the call to 'be the very presence of Jesus Christ in the world.'"

As I reflected on that article, I wondered what I am doing personally to address the plight of the poor. To be honest, in the neighborhood where I live I rarely encounter those who suffer from the growing pains of poverty. What does that say about my discipleship? I am becoming more aware of the work in addressing the ongoing challenge of poverty. There are numerous Christian organizations that can help provide information, tools, and avenues for supporting congregations in our witness and action such as Sojourners (www.sojo.net) and Bread for the World (www.bread.org). In my view, it begins with a desire to live more obediently in following Jesus in mission to a lost and broken world so loved by God.

Wayne Van Regenmorter

Schedule:

January 21: Meeting/Chicago

22: Office

23: Travel/Meetings/San Antonio, Texas

24-27: One Thing/New Church Planters meetings/San Antonio, Texas

28: Off

29: Office

30: Meeting/Prayer Mobilization/Dyer, IN

31: Meeting/Elim Reformed Church/Kings, IL

February 1: Travel to Philadelphia, Penn

2: Lead seminar/workshops/Delaware-Raritan Classis

3: 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

From Randy Kooy, Synod Coordinator-Administrator-Stated Clerk-Treasurer

(rkooy@rca.org):

Schedule:

January 21 – DeMotte office

22 – Manitoqua office

23 – DeMotte office

24-26 – One Thing event, San Antonio, TX

28 – DeMotte office

29 – DeMotte office

30 – Prayer mobilization mtg, Dyer, AM; Manitoqua office, PM

31 – DeMotte office; Illiana Classis, Glenwood, PM

February 1 – DeMotte office

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
