
SYNOD OF MID-AMERICA
Reformed Church in America
NEWSLETTER - - - Volume 10, Number 12 - - - June 29, 2009
<http://www.midamericasynod.org>

“Healthy classes and congregations through revitalization and multiplication”

Church, Classis, Pastor News

- The Classis of Chicago ordained **Bill Flavin** on June 14, 2009 with the service of ordination occurring at Christ Community Church in Lemont, Illinois. Bill is serving as the pastor at Trinity Reformed Church of Brown Deer, Wisconsin – see next news item.
- The Classis of Wisconsin will install the **Rev. Bill Flavin as the pastor of Trinity Reformed Church of Brown Deer**, Wisconsin on Sunday, July 12, 2009 at 3:00 PM. We celebrate with the congregation, minister, and classis this new pastoral relationship.
- The Classis of Wisconsin will ordain and install **Bob Able** on Sunday, July 18, 2009 at 3:00 PM. The service will be held at **Bethany Reformed Church of Sheboygan**, Wisconsin where he will be installed as an associate pastor. Bob has been on staff at Bethany for several years and is leading the Remedy satellite congregation of Bethany. We celebrate with the congregation, minister, and classis in reaching this phase in the ministry of Bob at Bethany Reformed.
- **Heartland Community Church of Lafayette**, Indiana dedicated their new worship facility on Sunday, June 21, 2009. Heartland Community was formally First Reformed Church of Lafayette. They sold their former building several years ago and they have been worshipping in a local elementary school while their new building has been under construction. If you would like to see a dedication Sunday slideshow that chronicles the journey of the building you can view it at their website: <http://www.heartlandlafayette.org/>



Living Fire Leadership Ministries

The vision of Living Fire Leadership Ministries is to ignite a leadership movement within the local Church, to advance Christ's kingdom, by using the appropriate tools to naturally direct the individual. Living Fire continues to grow with another church beginning the program this fall. The first year of Living Fire is called The Emerging Journey and is applicable to every member of the church, not just present or potential leaders. When a person completes only year one, they will be changed spiritually for the remainder of their life. The Holy Spirit changes each person in a different way but one they can clearly define in themselves. Churches of the Synod of Mid-America are encouraged to investigate participation in Living Fire Leadership Ministries. For more information or questions you can contact Larry Bolt (lbolt@faithchurchoonline.org or 219-864-0300) or contact the synod office.

RCA Today

Every issue of the RCA Today contains news from our regional synod within the center pages. If you missed the mailed copy of the most recent RCA Today you can read the Synod of Mid-America news from this issue on line at: <http://www.rca.org/Page.aspx?pid=5590>. The most recent issue contained stories about prayer walking in Fond du Lac, Manitoqua ministering to kids beyond those from RCA churches, a soup kitchen in Downers Grove, Illinois, and a story about Winterfest.

Microsoft Explorer 8 and the Synod's Website

If you are using the newest edition of Microsoft's Explorer (version 8) internet browser and have tried to access the Synod of Mid-America website with it, you may have experienced some navigation problems as you tried to move around the site. Certain links and graphics were not showing up because of incompatibility issues. We believe that those issues have now been addressed so the synod's website should now be working properly. (<http://www.midamericasynod.org/>)

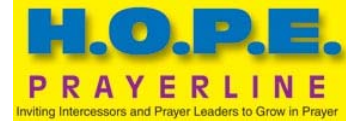
Prayer Resources, Requests, and Events:

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

The June 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 common concerns. This month's issue will ask prayer partners to focus on Illinois Classis churches and pastors, congregations without senior pastors, as well as other concerns and events. You are asked to click on Intercessors Unite and pray the prayer agenda listed for the month of May. Follow this link: <http://midamericasynod.org/IntUnite/IntercessUnite200906.htm>. **Please forward this information to those in your church whose gift is praying.**

H.O.P.E. Prayerline

This issue for June focuses on repentant prayer. "Prayers of repentance are some of the hardest prayers to pray, but they are also some of the most powerful." This month's issue of the [HOPE \(Houses of Prayer Equipping\) Prayerline](#) newsletter can be found at this link: <http://www.rca.org/Page.aspx?pid=5744>. Here are some articles in this month's issue:



- Praying the Difficult Psalms: Nola Boezeman explains how she learned to value the psalms that she finds difficult or unpleasant.
- Let's All Do the "Conviction Squirm": Kathryn Randall tells of a congregation's reaction to a powerful sermon on repentance.
- "Again": A poem by Elsie Flynn

Prayer Resources List

Here is a list of current prayer resources on the synod's website:

- [Intercessors Unite](#) — Intercessors Unite is a monthly prayer focus tool to help us as a synod focus our prayers on common concerns. This link will lead to the most current issue.
- [Partnering in Prayer for our Pastor](#) — A guide for praying for pastors and their families
- [Why Pray With a Group](#) — Thirty-two reasons why we should utilize the power of corporate prayer.
- [Beginning a Prayer Ministry](#) — Some first steps in starting a prayer ministry in your church
- [Prayer Ideas](#) — A list of suggested prayer ideas that can fit with the vision of your church and prayer ministry

Celebration Stories

No story this issue. Readers are requested to contribute stories for this section. Contact Randy Kooy at rkooy@rca.org.

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):

What makes you vibrate?

In the book, *The Leader's Journey*, Jim Herrington writes: "Some congregations see the world as a safe place to be and are much freer to take a risk, pursue a goal, and respond calmly to a crisis. Others see and feel the world as threatening and dangerous; anxiety dominates that congregation."

The higher the level of chronic anxiety in a system, the more difficult it is for that system to function in a healthy way.” As pastors and church leaders dealing with change, we typically deal with the anxiety that is inevitable in the congregations we serve, in family relationships, and in other organizations. Sometimes we need to deal with our own anxiety; sometimes we observe the symptoms of anxiety in others. What happens often in the midst of anxiety is that it seems like we begin to vibrate.

What makes you vibrate? What are those circumstances, people or decisions that make you anxious? What gets your heart pumping and stirs you up inside? But even more important than that, what do you typically do when you are vibrating? Herrington identifies four symptoms.

Distancing: When anxiety arises, some people withdraw emotionally. They pull away from people, keeping the relationship peaceful but superficial. Distancing can show up in a church in many ways such as cold worship services, people putting up walls, prayer requests that seldom go beyond the superficial, or the passive-aggressive behavior of a church leader or staff member.

Conflict: When you engage people more intensely, to persuade them to think or act differently and, nothing happens, the level of anxiety arises and conflict emerges. People begin to reveal an all-or-nothing attitude and insist on having their own way. We identify a person or a group as the problem and try to change them.

Overfunctioning and underfunctioning: Sometimes we respond to anxiety by **overfunctioning** where we take on more responsibility than is ours in a relationship or a situation. Or maybe we **underfunction** by not taking enough responsibility for ourselves and our relationships. Overfunctioning and underfunctioning show up in congregations in a variety of ways. When a financial crisis comes, a high percentage of congregational members underfunction in not giving their part, while a small portion of the congregation overfunctions by giving more. It shows up when one staff member performs poorly and other staff members cover up for the underfunctioning one by making excuses and doing that person’s work.

Triangles: We project our anxiety onto other people in the congregation, pulling them in to bolster our position or getting in between two other people who are experiencing anxiety in their relationship.

Trisha Taylor in her blog on anxiety says that “effective leaders are able to monitor their own anxiety in a given situation and manage it. They know when they are vibrating before they are so anxious they can’t turn back. They are also keenly aware of their own predictable reactions and can intercept them before they become inevitable. Effective leaders also pay attention to the anxiety of others. Without absorbing or taking responsibility for the reactions of other people, these leaders are able to see anxiety as it develops in relationships and predict what is likely to happen. They are then able to introduce--through their own behavior--a measure of calmness and rationality.”

When life begins to shake, the only thing that can restore peace and calmness in us is to grab hold of something solid, something unshakable. Jesus said in John 14:1, “Do not let your hearts be troubled.” To quiet a troubled and anxious heart, He said, grab hold of God in faith: “Trust in God, trust also in me.” When we grab hold of God or more accurately He grabs hold of us, then our anxious hearts begin to calm down. We begin to grow still and know He is God (Psalm 46:10).

Wayne Van Regenmorter

Schedule:

- June 29: Ridder Network/Faith Community Church/Stickney, IL
- 30: Conference Call
- July 1: Office
- 2: Office
- 3: Independence Day
- 4: Off
- 5: Sunday Worship
- 6: Meeting/South Holland, IL
- 7: Coaching
- 8: Office
- 9: Meeting/Grand Rapids, MI
- 10: Office

11: Off
12: 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:

A Child Turns to the Fold from The New York Times

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/14/fashion/14generationb.html?_r=2

In April, Bob Sweeney's son, Ryan, 13, suddenly announced he wanted to start going to church. While Mr. Sweeney had been quite religious once he'd stopped attending church 40 years ago, and he and his wife had raised their son without religion. "I said O.K., fine," Mr. Sweeney recalled, assuming this was a whim. "We let the conversation end without coming to conclusions or decisions." But later that week, on the ride home from middle school, Ryan said, "You know what we're doing this weekend, Dad? We're going to church." – [A Pew] survey also found that 54 percent of children raised unaffiliated with a religion later choose one — three-fourths of them by age 24. So Ryan's not the exception; he's just early.

Ministry in Motion: Churches Use New Approaches to Reach Out from The Morning News

<http://www.nwaonline.net/articles/2009/06/13/religion/061309methodistnew.txt>

There's no stained glass, no pew, no steeple. But on Wednesday nights, a former automotive garage is transformed into a house of worship. Pontiac Church blends tradition with a contemporary purpose.

Top Weaknesses of Effective Pastors from Church Central

http://www.churchcentral.com/blog_page.php?id=236

An effective church attracts the unchurched and grows as a result of its outreach. A study conducted by Thom Rainer and his team conducted a few years ago focused on the strengths and weaknesses of leaders of effective churches. The leaders' best practices – as well as their admitted deficiencies – are worth noting as you examine your own gifts and shortcomings. This article touches on a few of their top weaknesses.

Let Everyone Join the Song from Ministry Toolbox

<http://www.pastors.com/blogs/ministrytoolbox/archive/2009/06/12/let-everyone-join-the-song.aspx>

If worship is the work of the people, something we do together, something we share, then it might make sense that the more we can involve all the people in all the aspects of worship, the better it is. This is definitely true with your worship music. We want the greatest possible involvement of all the people in the making of music and in the receiving of what music has to offer. Here are a few ideas about how your music program can perhaps become ever more connected to the rest of worship.

Americans are Exploring New Ways of Experiencing God from The Barna Group

<http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/12-faithspirituality/270-americans-are-exploring-new-ways-of-experiencing-god>

Americans are in a new age of exploration, deploying new approaches to marriage, communications, sexuality, education, and more. According to the results from a new nationwide survey by The Barna Group, the "and more" includes how people pursue their faith and how they choose to relate to God and other people of faith.

Churches Report Drop in Offerings; Few Tighten Budgets from The Christian Post

<http://www.christianpost.com/article/20090620/churches-report-drop-in-offerings-few-tighten-budgets/index.html>

While nearly half of all churches have reported a decrease in tithes and offerings, many have still increased their budgets this year, a new survey shows. Forty percent of surveyed church leaders said current economic conditions have resulted in a drop in weekly giving by two percent or more, according to Your Church magazine's Budget Priorities Survey.

Schedule:

June 29 – DeMotte office

30 – DeMotte office

July 1 – Manitoqua office

2 – DeMotte office

3 – Independence Day holiday

6 – DeMotte office

7 – DeMotte office

8 – DeMotte office

9 – Manitoqua office; Forrester Reformed PM

10 – 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.