
SYNOD OF MID-AMERICA
Reformed Church in America
NEWSLETTER - - - Volume 9, Number 13 - - - July 7, 2008
<http://www.midamericasynod.org>

“Healthy classes and congregations through revitalization and multiplication”

2008 Standard Mileage Rate Change

The IRS announced a change in the standard mileage rate beginning July 1, 2008 and going through the end of the year. The IRS rules, including its standard mileage rate, are what the Minister Salary Guidelines (as approved by each classis) requires a church to use to reimburse a pastor use of his or her personal vehicle for church business. The new rate is **58.5 cents per mile**. For more information you can read the IRS news release here: <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=184163,00.html>

Newsletter Archive

Remember something of interest in a past Synod of Mid-America newsletter but you have deleted it? Previous copies of the newsletter are available on the synod's website at this location:
http://www.midamericasynod.org/index_files/news.htm

Willow Creek Leadership Summit

Willow Creek Church presents its annual Leadership Summit on August 7-8. This is a gathering for leaders serious about developing their leadership gift. The event features highly-respected senior pastors as well as innovative minds from the public and social sectors leading right where they are. Each session delivers practical learnings alongside inspiring programming to stretch a congregation's leadership bandwidth. Every year the Summit is much more than “just a conference”: It's crafted to envision, equip, and encourage teams with space to grow and learn together. It's two full days of opportunity—during sessions, over meals, and in the moments in between—to process the life-changing potential of your church in your community.

Besides its north-Chicago live location, the Summit is presented at a number of satellite locations around the country. You can check out the Leadership Summit website for more information and to find a location near you: <http://www.willowcreek.com/events/leadership/2008/index.html>. One of our own churches, Faith Church in Dyer, Indiana, will be a satellite location for this year's Summit. You can find more information about the Summit at Faith Church at: <http://www.faithchurchoonline.org/LeadershipSummit/tabid/140/Default.aspx> or call 219-864-0300

Louisville Institute Sabbatical Grant Opportunity

The following announcement came to the attention of the regional synod:

The Louisville Institute is pleased to announce the 15th annual competition for sabbatical grants for pastoral leaders. Last year 48 grants were awarded to applicants from a pool numbering over 350. Applications for this year's grant competition must be completed by September 15. Details of our grant application process and eligibility requirements are available at <http://www.louisville-institute.org/Grants/programs/sgpldetail.aspx>. By way of summary, here are some core program facts:

- Applicants must be regularly employed in a recognized religious leadership position. Applicants may be ordained or lay, and may or may not have a formal theological degree. Eligible positions include pastors and other parish ministers, chaplains, faith-based community agency leaders, and church judicatory officials.
- Awardees will ordinarily have been in their current place of ministry at least five years, and will plan on staying in their current place for at least a year beyond their sabbatical. They will be at least five years away from retirement. Exceptions are possible, especially in church polities built on an interagency model.
- Awards are made for either eight or twelve-week sabbaticals. Sabbaticals are taken in a continuous single period. Applicants choose whether to apply for an eight-week sabbatical, with a \$10,000 award, or for a twelve-week sabbatical, which bears a \$15,000 award. The size of award request has no bearing on the chances of receiving an award.

- Applications are due no later than September 15, 2008. Award announcements will be made by December 15, and sabbaticals must be taken between March 1, 2009 and August 31, 2010.
- Full program information and application materials are available at our website, www.louisville-institute.org.

This is an opportunity for rest and renewal for pastors. Please do not hesitate to contact Sheldon W. Sorge, Associate Director of the Louisville Institute if you would like to discuss further sabbatical programs, or any other grant programs—502-992-5430.

Celebration Stories of Revitalization and Multiplication

This issue's story comes from Faith Church in Dyer, Indiana about Catalyst: their new twenty-something service:

“On June 5th, Catalyst (A ministry of Faith Church in Dyer, Indiana) started a twenty-something service to reach young adults in the NW Indiana area. The goal is this: stealing words from Dallas Willard, “We want to get Jesus a fresh hearing.” We had heard the statistics. Twenty-somethings are absent from churches, they think the church is full of hypocrites and think there are better ways to feed their spirituality.



“The community of Catalyst believed for something more than what the statistics were telling us. We decided to experiment. What if we created a young adult service that was radically Jesus—full of grace and truth? What would happen? So far the results have been amazing. On the kickoff night of the service, 250 came. Since then, the service continues to be packed.

“Twenty-somethings from all over the region and from different churches are coming to be part of what God is doing. The coolest thing is that dozens of these young adults are men and women that are disconnected from the church. We are praying that this summer God would give us a harvest. For more info check out our website: <http://www.catalyst12.com/>.”

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):

Summer Priorities – Time with Growing Leaders...

Our lives are regulated by time—time to work, time with family, time to watch our favorite sports team, time to run our lives, time to go to church, time to grow leaders. Time runs our lives. It is not that way everywhere. In some parts of our world no one wears a watch and time is casual. Life is not so much controlled by time as by the need to eat and sleep and grow a few crops when the need arises. Is a casual attitude toward time better than the precise hour and minute and second timing of our modern lives? It really doesn't matter. The moral or immoral choice comes in our use of the time which the Creator has given. How will we “use up” the time and life God has given us—for that we shall make an accounting before our Maker.

As we come to the heart of the summer, let's re-consider whether we are using our time wisely. Is our time being invested in the things that will last for eternity, or is it principally used for that which will soon be rusted or burned or outdated? But what will last for all time? Only people, made with an eternal soul, and God. Therefore, the only wise use of my time is to bless people and God.

Well, how can I invest in people? Build friendships. Take time for the lonely. Listen to the need of someone. Resolve as a pastor to focus on a shortlist of people with whom you will step up to coach or to

mentor in the next year. Prayerfully make a list of emerging new leaders in your congregation. Identify the names of individuals who have shown signs of serious spiritual discipline and mission attitude. Contact each one and make an appointment to help emerging leaders discover insights for their current and future growth. It's good to consider now how much time you'll be setting aside for coaching and mentoring relationships in the coming ministry year. If you reserve time for these appointments now, you are less likely to be sidetracked by demands on your time from start up ministries in September. Remember, the wise leader does not just invest time with *needy people*, but he or she invests time with *growing people*. The more leaders you grow, the more people in need can be blessed. Will our time be used so well that at the end of our time we'll hear God saying: "**Well done, good and faithful servant.**"

Wayne Van Regenmorter

Schedule:

July 7: Restructure Task Team/Delevan, WI
Ridder Leadership/Network conference call
8: Fellowship Reformed Church/Lombard, IL
9: Office
10: Wisconsin Outreach Committee/Emmanuel Reformed Church/Waupun, WI
11: Meeting/Tinley Park, IL
12: Off
13: Sunday worship
14: NCD/Leadership Team/Fond du Lac, WI
15: Office
16: Staff meeting/Camp Manitoqua
17: Travel to Florida/meetings
18: Meeting/Christ Community Church/Pompano Beach, FL
19: Travel to Chicago
20: Sunday worship
21: Meeting/Beechwood Reformed Church/Holland, MI
Chicago Classis meeting/Christ Community Church/Lemont, IL
22: Network meeting/Baileyville Reformed Church, Baileyville, IL
Church Health Team meeting/Silver Creek reformed Church, German Valley, IL
23: Office
24: Meeting/St. John, IL
25: Office
26: Off
27: Sunday worship

Wayne's contact information:

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St. John, IN 46373
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From Randy Kooy, Synod Coordinator-Administrator-Stated Clerk-Treasurer (rkooy@rca.org):

Here are a few links to on-line articles that one may find interesting or helpful:

Church Attendance Beneficial to Marriage, Researcher Says from Cybercast News Service
<http://www.cnsnews.com/ViewCulture.asp?Page=/Culture/archive/200807/CUL20080702a.html>

Married couples who attend church together tend to be happier than couples who rarely or never attend services, according to sociologist W. Bradford Wilcox of the University of Virginia.

Walking in Step from the Leadership Journal
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2008/002/19.30.html>

Elders and ministers can lead successfully together if they share these four priorities: prayer, fellowship, compassion, and vision.

Seven Lessons from Paul on How to Last in Ministry from Pastors.com
<http://www.pastors.com/RWMT/default.asp?id=355&artid=11274&expand=1>

Ministry isn't a 100-yard dash. It's a marathon. If you're going to fulfill your calling, you've got to keep going even when you're tired, misunderstood, and underappreciated. This article examines seven principles from the Apostle Paul on how to stand strong in ministry.

Schedule:

July 7 – DeMotte office
8 – DeMotte office
9 – Manitoqua office
10 – DeMotte office
11 – DeMotte office
14 – DeMotte office AM; VanWert, OH PM
15 – DeMotte office
16 – Manitoqua office; Staff mtg
17 – DeMotte office
18 – DeMotte office
21 – DeMotte office
22 – DeMotte office
23 – Manitoqua office
24-25 – Vacation days

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

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.