



# ELDER TRAINING

Reflecting on the events of his time, Thomas Paine declared in 1776, "these are the times that try men's souls."

Folk Singer Bob Dylan reflecting in song on the times we are in said, "for the times they are a changin'."

You chose to accept the invitation to serve as an ordained ruling elder at a time in the life of our denomination and your local church when times are changing and issues are not clear and easy. Your service to your congregation and the larger church comes at a time when every session and council of the church are wrestling with changes we did not choose and challenges that seem daunting. God has blessed you with gifts and talents that make this the right time to serve your congregation and the larger church. You have been called to discern God's vision and plan. You will be bombarded with data and details, requests and demands, and in the midst of it, you must determine what should be done, how it should be accomplished, who should be involved and how it will be funded. Many voices may be speaking, but in the midst of it, you must listen for God's voice. You will be challenged to find ways to speak the truth with love ... promote peace ... work for justice ... preach the gospel ... advance the kingdom ... and much more. As with the prophet Isaiah, God has said to you "whom shall I send?" And you are the one who has raised your hand and raised your voice and declared, "it is me, Lord."

Part of getting ready to be ordained and installed as a ruling elder is learning what is involved in serving a congregation in the PC(USA). To initiate that process, the Presbytery of Great Rivers will be offering five Elder Training events around the presbytery in the months of January and February. Each event is held on a **Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** with lunch served by the host church at noon.

The course is entitled

## "WHOM SHALL I SEND ... IT IS I LORD"

### **The topics to be covered will be:**

- Significance of Personal Faith
- Role & Place of Presbyterian Beliefs
- Fundamentals of Church Order
- Decision Making
- Duties of Elders/Session

There will be plenty of opportunity for small group conversation along with games ... laughter ... serious reflection ... and prayer.

*The training will be taught by Rev. Richard Johnson, Pastor of the Biggsville United Presbyterian Church.*

## **THE DATES AND LOCATIONS OF THE 2012 ELDER TRAINING EVENTS ARE...**

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|--|---------------------------|
| <b>Sat., January 14, 2012 @ Woodhull, United</b>         | <b>RSVP by January 5</b>  |
| <b>Sat., January 21, 2012 @ Bloomington, St. Luke</b>    | <b>RSVP by January 12</b> |
| <b>Sat., January 28, 2012 @ Lewistown, First</b>         | <b>RSVP by January 19</b> |
| <b>Sat., February 4, 2012 @ Springfield, Third</b>       | <b>RSVP by January 26</b> |
| <b>Sat., February 11, 2012 @ Peoria, First Federated</b> | <b>RSVP by February 2</b> |

**RSVP** to Julie [jbainbridge@greatriverspby.org](mailto:jbainbridge@greatriverspby.org) or call 800-537-8592