

GOOD NEWS FROM GREAT RIVERS

March 8, 2010



[PRESBYTERY OF GREAT RIVERS](#)

1230 W Candletree Dr, Suite D, Peoria, IL 61614
800-537-8592

Mark Your Calendars

Visioning Council

Thursday, March 11
1:30 - 6:30
Westminster, Peoria

Interim Pastor's Group

Thursday, March 18
11:30 - 1:30
PGR

CLP & Spouse's Luncheon

Saturday, March 20
11:00 - 1:30
Barrack's Cater Inn
*RSVP to [Julie](#)
by March 11*

COM

Tuesday, March 23
10:00 - 3:00
Northminster, Peoria

CPM

Thursday, April 1
9:30 - 4:00
Northminster, Peoria

OFFICE CLOSED

Good Friday
Friday, April 2

General Presbyter's Perspective Rev. Susan Krummel

At the end of this note, you will find two links to news articles from the Presbyterian News Service. These articles will help you to see what the national church has been doing about an issue that has a very local impact for many people in Great Rivers Presbytery. Because this issue will be before the General Assembly when it meets in July in Minneapolis, and because there will probably be some secular press about this in the near future, I wanted to catch you up with what the presbytery office and some members of the presbytery have been doing with regard to divestment from Caterpillar.

First, the background. The national church has a committee that advises the Presbyterian Foundation and the Board of Pensions (the two groups that invest money for the national church) about companies in which we should not invest as a church. For instance, we do not invest in companies whose main business is alcohol, tobacco, gambling or armaments. When questions arise about investments, this committee of 12 people from the Foundation, the Board of Pensions and from the church at large researches the issues and makes recommendations. In recent years, the committee has been asked to research five corporations in which the church holds stock because of those companies' business interests in the Middle East. This is part of a larger context of the church taking positions with regard to the ongoing struggles between the nation of Israel and their Palestinian neighbors.

The dialogue with these corporations began six years ago. In the intervening years, the committee called Mission Responsibility Through Investment has, along with ecumenical partners, engaged the corporations in dialogue. Four years ago, the committee invited members of our presbytery to meet with them in Chicago to talk about the impact that a recommendation to divest from Caterpillar would have on our presbytery. Gary Davis (moderator of the Council at the time) Doug Hucke, Frosty Krummel and I met with them. Doug and Frosty went as pastors of churches in Peoria where Caterpillar's corporate headquarters are located and thereby pastors of a considerable number of Caterpillar managers, engineers and executives. The committee listened politely to us and then voted to continue to investigate the use of Caterpillar equipment by the Israeli army. Caterpillar has reported to us and to MRTI that their equipment used by the army is not sold directly from Caterpillar to the army, but is, instead, sold to the United States government which then supplies the equipment to the Israelis. They also, of course, make tractors. These tractors are then, sometimes, altered by the Israelis for military use.

Since that time, MRTI did not initiate contact with our presbytery until very recently. A year ago in a casual conversation with a member of MRTI, I discovered that they were still considering recommending divestment from Caterpillar. That information started a series of contacts from me with MRTI, Caterpillar, and other members of the national leadership of the PCUSA. As a part of those conversations, Randy Saxon, Doug Hucke, Frosty Krummel and I prepared an impact statement for MRTI to tell them what it would be like for Peoria pastors if MRTI recommended divestment from Caterpillar. The contacts in the last few months culminated in an invitation in the last few weeks for someone from Great Rivers to attend the General Assembly Mission Council subcommittee meeting where the recommendation from MRTI would be acted upon. That recommendation is that Caterpillar's profit-making from selling tractors that end up being used by the Israeli army be denounced. Doug was in Mexico on a mission trip; I was at McCormick Seminary in a class; Frosty went to Louisville. He was asked one question by the committee: "Did the whole presbytery approve the impact statement?" He told them we did not and that was the extent of their questions.

So, here is where we are. The General Assembly Mission Council is recommending to the General Assembly that Caterpillar's profit-making in the Middle East be denounced. MRTI wants to continue its dialogue with Caterpillar to try to convince them that this practice is wrong. That means that, if the GA accepts this recommendation, this is not over. You should also know that there is already at least one overture to the GA asking that the PCUSA divest from Caterpillar immediately.

Our presbytery has not taken a stand on this issue since we have not voted on it as a presbytery. In all of our discussions with MRTI, we have made that clear and have not debated the merits of Caterpillar's business practices. What we have tried to do is to help those who will vote on this issue to understand what it feels like to those who are PCUSA members and who help make the decisions at Caterpillar to be told that their business practices are immoral. It has seemed to be important that they should take this into consideration as they vote.

I would be happy to try to answer any questions you might have about this. You could also contact the Peoria pastors who have been involved in this issue over the last several years. This will be only one of many, many issues at General Assembly and, in the scheme of the work of your congregation, a very minor decision. But, since it has such local impact, it seemed important to bring you up to date.

Presbyterian News Service articles

[GAMC recommends Caterpillar's profit from non-peaceful activities in Israel-Palestine be denounced](#)

[Presbyterians favor pushing corporations not to promote violence](#)

We Prayed For You This Week

During our staff meetings each week, the presbytery staff prays for some of our churches. We are sharing those churches with you, so that you, too, can pray for them. How strong we all are through the power of prayer.

Farmington, [First Presbyterian Church](#)

Galesburg, [First Presbyterian Church](#)

Geneseo, First Presbyterian Church

Green Valley, First Presbyterian Church

Presbytery of Great Rivers will have **41** youth attending the 2010 Presbyterian Youth Triennium, at Purdue University, July 20-24.

Now that you have made this commitment, your next step is to fill out the [PYT Registration Application](#) **completely** and return to [Julie](#) at the Presbytery of Great Rivers office.

Application Deadline for Presbytery of Great Rivers is **Monday, May 24.**

Do You WANT Your Church to Grow?

Have you or members of your congregation registered for The Magnetic Church event **April 23-24**? COME FOR YOUR CHURCH! Do you want to become more involved in the mission and ministry of your church? But you're not sure where to begin, what to do, or how to apply your own unique gifts and personal talents. Begin by coming to this event to learn a whole lot about practical evangelism. AND ALONG THE WAY ... You may discover new ways to apply your talents and skills.



[Click here](#) for more information and [Registration Form](#).

Transformation in Your Congregation

Are you interested in transformation in your congregation? The Presbytery of Des Moines is sponsoring a workshop called "Plugging in Without Shorting Out" on April 16, 17, 18 in Des Moines. To find out more information go to their website [Presbytery of Des Moines](#).

Presbytery Night at the Ballpark

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Friday, June 11, 2010

If your choir would like to sing the National Anthem before the game, contact [Julie](#) by March 25.



Green Energy

By Laurie Vial, Energy Consultant

Hypermiling contests gained media attention several years ago when a Toyota Prius owner milked his unmodified car to over 100 mpg which is rated by the new government standards at just over 50 mpg. It's a great tool to add to your environmental arsenal - which like many life changes that are pro environment it is also pro pocketbook.

A quick disclaimer is in order before proceeding. Hypermiling must be done in a manner that is safe for you, your passengers and other drivers. It requires extra concentration and should not be attempted in areas of heavy traffic or bad weather conditions. But if adopted in a safe manner hypermiling techniques can become second nature and save on fuel and wear and tear on your car. Another win, win, win.

If you are not blessed with an onboard dashboard computer described in last week's column you'll have to hone the following techniques. Remember when you were learning to drive and your parents or the driver's ed instructor hissed don't ride the brake, don't brake suddenly and no "jackrabbit" starts - well that is roughly the goal of hypermiling.

If you look ahead and see a light that is turning yellow take your foot off the accelerator and coast up to the light. If you are lucky it will turn green as you approach it and you can glide through and then gently accelerate as opposed to maintaining road speed, coming to a jarring stop at the last moment and then roaring off when the light turns green. Coasting at an efficient mpg rather than getting zero mpg at a stop can really add up over the course of a year.

When you are going downhill also take your foot off the accelerator and allow the momentum of the car to propel you forward instead of using unnecessary fuel. Many hypermilers also shift into neutral at this point but be careful.

Start off the program by getting your vehicle tuned up and making sure the tires are properly inflated. Lots of hypermilers prefer nitrogen in their tires for optimum gas mileage year

round. It is key to keep air filters clean and check the O₂ sensors.

Shed any extra weight in your car - one hypermiler's spouse had 200 pounds of books in her trunk for several months until she got them dropped off at a charity book drive. Extra dog food or softener salt can drop optimum mileage.

And don't idle if you can turn your car off instead. Give hypermiling a try - try to retrain your habits and save wear and tear on your car like the brake pads. Drop me an e-mail Laurie Vial and let me know about your success.

Feel free to post this column on your church bulletin board or reproduce them in your church newsletter. If you received this newsletter as a forward and want to subscribe go to the upper right-hand corner of the [Presbytery of Great Rivers](http://www.Presbytery of Great Rivers) website. Until next week let's all strive to be good stewards of God's earth.

News From the Board of Pensions

Benefits Connect Tip:

Church treasurers and business administrators can securely confirm or change their members' salary information.

Just click on the "Register" button under the Benefits Connect logo on the [Pensions.org homepage](http://Pensions.org). In Step 1 of the registration process, you will be asked to specify what your role is. You should click on the button for "Authorized Web Representative." Then just complete the rest of the registration information and establish your user ID and password. It's that easy.

ActiveHealth Management Bringing New Features to Members This Spring

Coming in April, ActiveHealth Management is taking our health management services to a new level with the unveiling of a private and secure online personal health record for you and your family members. In addition to providing a unique personal health record, this Web site will be your gateway to many other great health programs and services to better manage your health.

Active members can receive a \$100 health stewardship incentive for participating in the program. Look for more information about the Web site and the incentive coming soon to Pensions.org.

Your health information is kept strictly confidential. The ActiveHealth Management programs and tools are secure and confidential, in full compliance with federal and state laws. ActiveHealth Management understands and respects the privacy of all personal health information.

Thank You for Your Gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering

The Assistance Program of The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) sincerely appreciates the gifts members and congregations made to the Christmas Joy Offering. With these gifts, the program provides grants to Presbyterian ministers, other church workers, and their families who struggle to make ends meet.

The Assistance Program receives no funds from pension or medical dues. Its grants are funded entirely by gifts, bequests, and one-half of the Christmas Joy Offering.

In addition to the programs supported by the Christmas Joy Offering, the Assistance Program also offers a number of other programs, such as ones that address church leadership needs through pastoral vocational and leadership training. To learn more, visit the Assistance Program section of Pensions.org.

Benefits Connect Provides You Secure Access to Your Personal and Benefits Information

Benefits Connect is the Board's secure online resource for active and retired members and surviving spouses. Through Benefits Connect, you can (as applicable):

- update your mailing, home, or email address
- add or remove a dependent or edit his or her information

- review your service information
- view your medical benefits
- access useful partner resources
 - get a pension estimate
 - check your death benefits and calculate your total death benefits
 - find your annual disability benefit
- confirm your Retirement Savings Plan participation

Take advantage of this convenient site today by clicking on the "Register" button under the Benefits Connect logo on the [Pensions.org homepage](#).

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