

GOOD NEWS FROM GREAT RIVERS

June 7, 2010



[PRESBYTERY OF GREAT RIVERS](#)

1230 W Candletree Dr, Suite D, Peoria, IL 61614
800-537-8592 / Peoria 309-683-6980 / Fax: 309-683-6983

Mark Your Calendar

SUMMER HOURS

Mon.-Thurs. 8:00 - 4:00
Closed Friday

Peoria Chiefs Game

Friday, June 11
7:00pm
[O'Brien Field](#)

Interim Pastor's Group

Wednesday, June 16
11:30 - 1:30
PGR

Small Church Event

Saturday, June 19
10:00 - 2:00
First, Lewistown

COM

Tuesday, June 22
10:00 - 3:00
Northminster, Peoria

Nominating Committee

Tuesday, June 29
10:00 - 2:00
PGR

Administration Council

Wednesday, June 30
10:00 - Noon
PGR

Special Presbytery Meeting

Wednesday, June 30
1:30
First Federated, Peoria

General Presbyter's Perspective Rev. Susan Krummel

Well, it was an interesting weather weekend in Central Illinois! Did you spend time in your basement on Saturday evening, or are you a person (like my dad always was) who likes to stand outside and watch the sky to see what is really happening? The hardest hit town in our presbytery was Elmwood. I talked to Gene Campbell, the pastor there, on Sunday morning. He believed at that point that if there was any damage to the church building it would be the loss of a few shingles. The damage started just at the edge of the church's property. Gene said that he came up from his basement to turn off his air conditioner just after the first tornado passed and saw the second one coming. Scary. My husband and I were driving to Peoria from Chicago-that was pretty scary as well!

After storms like these when we check on church buildings that are so important to the people who are members of those congregations, I am often reminded of the heritage we have in this part of the country around our church buildings. I have been to several church anniversaries lately and it is fascinating to hear about the history of the buildings in which these congregations have met. During the pioneer and building days of many of the congregations in our presbytery, they met in very small log cabins or shared a building that was also used as a schoolhouse or a barn or, in at least one case, a tavern. Then the congregations often left that building behind or tore it down and moved into something a little larger and, perhaps, near a paved road or at least a road that was more heavily traveled. Most of our congregations also outgrew that building (or in many cases, that building succumbed to fire) and they moved into the building they now occupy.

As I have listened to these stories about a church's history, I am often struck by the willingness of our 19th century ancestors in the faith to be daring, to embrace change, and to raise the kind of money they needed to build a new building that incorporated modern conveniences like plumbing. I have been to too many session meetings in the last seven years in which a discussion about the building comes up. The people sitting around the table often realize, even if they are not brave enough to say it, that their church building is in much poorer condition than any other public building in town. It is often inaccessible for those with mobility problems and is not designed in any way to accommodate the needs of people who might be potential members. Those potential new members look for convenient parking, well-appointed and safe nursery and childcare facilities, and convenient and modern bathroom facilities. Those are the equivalent of the reasons our ancestors left behind outdated buildings. They often did not worry about getting their money's worth out of their old

building. Often they simply tore it down. Yet, our generation of church leaders will go to great lengths to patch awkward and unattractive additions onto a very old building simply because they cannot imagine giving it up. Every church building seems to be some combination of museum and usable, attractive space. On which side of that equation is your building more heavily weighted?

What happened between the late 1800's and now? What made our ancestors more daring, more willing to leave behind an old building that no longer met their needs and the needs of their neighbors? How have we become so attached to our buildings that they become, in many ways, an expensive albatross around the financial necks of our congregations?

A congregation that I served as co-pastor had what is still the most beautiful sanctuary and stained glass windows I have ever seen. Their ancestors in the 1880's tore down an old building on that site and then raised the money and built and maintained that gorgeous sanctuary. The rest of the building is not very serviceable for the 21st century and so there were discussions about a new building. They could not face leaving that sanctuary. But, I would remind them that it did not drop down in one piece from heaven. Someone designed it, paid for it, built it (and stained glass windows can be moved!) They are still in that old building.

As we move deeper into the 21st century, think about your church building. Is it an asset or a liability; is it welcoming to strangers or does it seem like a fortress; could you imagine worshiping anywhere else, even sharing space with some other entity in your town, just like your ancestors did?

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.

Monmouth, Heritage United Presbyterian Church
Monmouth, Sugar Tree Grove Presbyterian Church
Morton, First Presbyterian Church
Mt. Sterling, [Mt. Sterling Presbyterian Church of Christ](#)

Small Church Event

Today is the last day to RSVP to [Patti](#) (800) 537-8592.

Saturday, June 19, 2010

10:00am - 2:00pm

First Presbyterian Church

101 N. Main Street
Lewistown, IL 61542

Join Moderator Danie deBeer and Executive Sue Krummel to hear about Danie's DMin Thesis on revitalizing small churches and to address the issues shared by our smallest congregations. Each participating congregation will receive a \$50 "economic stimulus contribution."

Lunch will be served at no charge for participants.

Session Record Review

There will be four Session Record Reviews offered this year. The reviews will be held on Saturdays from 9:30am to noon. Clerks of Session, please RSVP as soon as possible to [Julie](#) and let her know which date you will attend.

July 17	First, Springfield	RSVP by July 8
August 14	First, Macomb	RSVP by August 5
September 18	United, Woodhull	RSVP by September 9

Be sure to bring your worksheet and fill it out prior to the meeting.

[2010 Session Record Review Cover Sheet](#)



Green Energy
By Laurie Vial, Energy Consultant

Okay, shame on Kleenex for coming out with a disposable hand towels for home bathrooms. Talk about two steps forward and one step back. Keep using your terry cloth bathroom towels and washing them. And better yet dry them on the clothesline. When someone in the family is sick we hang out a towel with a clip clothespin clipped to it and everyone knows that towel is reserved for the sick person. Works great.

As many public restrooms are managed in a greener manner we are seeing more and more hand dryers. Some of the new ones are so powerful it moves the skin on your hands back and forth!!! When I visit the restroom at Lucca Grill in Bloomington their cloth roller towels that are cleaned by a commercial laundry service and reused - reminds me of my days in grade school. Does anyone else encounter these towels anywhere?

I came to a conclusion the other day on my own and then it was backed up in an article on Earth Day in Family Circle magazine - many of us recycle in the kitchen but are not as likely to recycle in other areas of the house such as the bathroom (which can be on the second floor). Check those empty soap and shampoo bottles - most of them have the recycle symbol on the bottom. Better yet buy soap and shampoo in volume sizes such as gallons and refill smaller bottles or dispensers in the shower.

If your recycling center is on the first floor of your house or in the basement it means setting the shampoo bottle aside and later getting it downstairs to the recycle bin. This makes the house look a little messy for a few hours and takes extra effort. The article challenges us to have recycle containers for office paper in several areas of the house - maybe a pretty basket in the living room and home office for magazine and "junk" mail. Make sure to shred any documents that contain confidential information.

We need to be recycling in every room of the house. Most of us start with the kitchen. Don't just recycle aluminum and steel cans and plastic bottles. Check the bottom of those deli containers. Recycle everything possible.

And while we're at it lets talk about plastic water bottles. Cease and desist! Start refilling a reusable water bottle made from a safe material with tap water, if yours is safe. If not get permission at work to refill your water bottles from the water dispenser in the break room.

Learn more about FREE energy audits for all churches in our Presbytery using the hot link below. Click on the following link to contact me [Laurie](#). Until next week let's all strive to be good stewards of God's earth.

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