

GOOD NEWS FROM GREAT RIVERS

September 14, 2009



PRESBYTERY OF GREAT RIVERS
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Mark Your Calendar

ASSEMBLY MEETING

Tuesday, Sept. 15
9:30
First, Macomb

Presbymergent Cohort

Thursday, Sept. 17
10:00 - 12:00
United, Peoria

Installation of the Rev. Susan Loper

Sunday, September 20
5:00pm
First United, Carthage
and First, Warsaw

COM Meeting

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

Clergy Group

Thursday, September 24
10:00 - 11:30
PGR

Pastor's Continuing Ed. - Tribal Church

Friday, September 25
9:30 - 3:30
WeaverRidge in Peoria

Commissioning of Susan Shike

Sunday, September 27
3:00pm
Sunbeam United, Aledo
and Center Pres., Seaton

General Presbyter's Perspective Rev. Susan Krummel

On Sunday I had the privilege of being with two of our congregations for celebrations. In the morning I was with Danvers as they celebrated 180 years of ministry as a congregation there. Just think, 1829--I wonder what life was like in Danvers, Illinois then? Those first people who met together as the church surely saw themselves in some lights as a civilizing force for that little corner of McLean County. Then in the afternoon I was with St. Luke Union Church in Bloomington as they celebrated the installation of their new pastor, Andy Gifford. Two churches standing at a point in time where they are looking at ways both to celebrate the past and to move into the future.

As I sat in the sanctuary at Danvers, I noticed a window with a large "C" and a smaller "E" inside of it. Are you old enough or enough of a history buff to know what that stands for? I see windows dedicated by the organization that used this symbol in many of our older church buildings. It stands for "Christian Endeavor", an organization for teenagers that was started by Francis Edward Clark in 1881. It was quite popular throughout the midwest and, perhaps, throughout the whole denomination at one time. This was the way youth ministry was done in many of our congregations throughout the early part of the 20th century. If you were in Christian Endeavor, then your youth group had officers and you sent people off to regional and national conventions and the like. If you Google Christian Endeavor, one of the first things that comes up is a Time magazine article from 1927 about the national convention. Teenagers who were members of Christian Endeavor pledged to try to make some useful contribution to the life of the church. Thus, the windows in many of our church buildings. We have lots of buildings that were built in the late 1800's and early 1900's, right when the Christian Endeavor movement was at its height. Probably, the people soliciting money for the windows asked the young people to contribute and, from the evidence I have seen, they did.

When I was sitting in worship yesterday thinking that I might write this article about Christian Endeavor, I thought I would be writing about an organization that used to exist and that has now gone the way of many such societies. But then I discovered that Christian Endeavor is alive and well. They have a very attractive website with step-by-step instructions about how to have this kind of youth ministry. They say very clearly that it

CPM Meeting

Thursday, October 1
9:30 - 2:30
Northminster, Peoria

Investments/Endowments

Workshop

Sunday, October 25
2:00 - 6:00
South Park, Rock Island

Investments/Endowments

Workshop

Monday, October 26
4:00 - 8:00
First, Normal

Investments/Endowments

Workshop

Tuesday, October 27
10:00 - 2:00
Westminster, Springfield

works best in small churches, that is, in churches that do not pay someone to "do" youth ministry. The heart of the CE society now is that the groups are student-led with adult coaches.

That really struck me. When I was in high school myself, I remember being the "president" of my youth group at a big church and having monthly youth council meetings where I moderated the meetings and there were equal numbers of youth and adults around the table. I now realize that must have been a vestige of the Christian Endeavor movement. But as I have served as a youth pastor and done lots of youth work as an adult, I realize that, for many of us, our approach to youth ministry has changed. Now it is, in many cases, a commodity that is provided FOR the youth instead of BY the youth. In big churches by this time of the year, the youth ministry leaders already have their years pretty well planned. They consist of weekly gatherings punctuated by big events along the way. Generally, all of the details and planning have been carried out by the adults and the teenagers become kind of consumers of the commodity.

You probably know that, as a denomination, we are not good at holding onto our own youth members as they become adults. Many of them drift away in their late teens and a large percentage of them never return to any church at all. I think a part of this phenomenon may be that we give them a false sense of what church is about when they are teenagers. Between the fun events and mission projects that just come one after the other, they may imagine that being an adult Christian is about amazing fellowship opportunities and wonderful mission events that "just happen." We may be shielding them from the struggles with budget, struggles with diverse personalities, struggles with lethargy and apathy that are also a part of church life. I wonder if the Christian Endeavor model which brought so many of our grandparents and great-grandparents into the life of faith and the life of the church might have something to teach us about helping our teenagers to become leaders in a real and meaningful way.

Elder Training

Each training event will be held on a Saturday from 8:30am - 3:00pm with lunch served at noon. **Registration** is required for the purpose of preparing the meal and providing training manuals. Registration is accomplished by contacting Julie at the presbytery office. Let [Julie](#) know how many will be attending and which event they prefer. If there are not at least ten registrations per event, cancellation is possible. We want to be good stewards of time and resources.

Please RSVP by the dates listed below.

- November 7 **RSVP before October 29** @ Third Pres., Springfield
- November 21 **RSVP before November 12** @ St. Luke Union, Bloomington
- January 9 **RSVP before January 4** @ First Pres., Lewistown
- January 16 **RSVP before January 7** @ TBA

Investments & Endowments Workshop

Charles Spencer and Lisa Longo (Development Officer of the Presbyterian Foundation) are coming to the presbytery three times in October to do one-day workshops to help churches think about their investments/endowments and long-term financial strategy. Register by contacting [Julie](#) at the presbytery office. **The deadline for registration is September 18.**

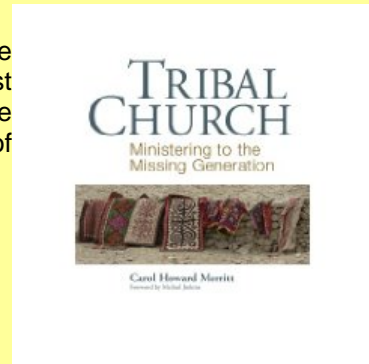
- Sunday, October 25, 2:00pm - 6:00pm, South Park Pres., Rock Island
- Monday, October 26, 4:00pm - 8:00pm, First Pres., Normal
- Tuesday, October 27, 10:00am - 2:00pm, Westminster Pres., Springfield

Continuing Education - Tribal Church

RSVP before this Thursday, September 17

Carol Howard Merritt will be with our pastors on Friday, September 25 to spend the day looking at her book Tribal Church: Ministering to the Missing Generation. Rev. Merritt has a radio show once a week with Bruce Reyes-Chow, the moderator of the General Assembly [blog talk radio](#) and also has a blog that might interest you [Tribal Church](#).

Pastors can register for the day at any time by contacting [Julie](#) . The event is from 9:30am - 3:30pm at Weaver Ridge in Peoria. The cost is \$25 per person and includes a wonderful lunch. Your \$25 can be paid the day of the meeting, make check payable to Presbytery of Great Rivers.



The [countdown](#) has begun.

Administrative Personnel Don't Miss This!

RSVP Today

Administrative Personnel Association (APA) Day will be held Tuesday, October 13 from 9:00am - 3:00pm at United Presbyterian Church in Peoria. The two classes offered are Spiritual Growth and Discipline and Developing Professionalism. Please RSVP by September 30 to Trish at upc@unitedpc.org.

[APA Flyer](#)

[Click here](#) to find out more about Administrative Personnel Association of the PC(U.S.A.).

Celebrating United Church of Woodhull's 40th Anniversary

All welcome to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of United Church of Woodhull.

Saturday the 26th:

4 p.m. Visit with the previous pastors

5 p.m. Choir Practice for any person who wants to sing on Sunday morning

6 p.m. Meal and program

Sunday the 27th:

10:30 a.m. Worship with communion by intinction

After worship cake in fellowship hall

[United Church of Woodhull](#)

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