

GOOD NEWS FROM GREAT RIVERS

December 14, 2009



[PRESBYTERY OF GREAT RIVERS](#)

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The next e-newsletter will be January 2010.
**HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A SAFE AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

Year-End Preparations

As we approach the end of the year, some churches are making their final 2009 per capita and mission payments while others are planning ahead and preparing their 2010 per capita and mission payments. As a rule of thumb, **payments that are postmarked by 12/31/09 will be considered 2009** payments and anything later will be considered 2010.

If you wish to prepay for 2010 that would be great, just please make sure you make it clear on your remittance what year it is for. Thanks so much for your help and cooperation

Amy Gardner, Financial Secretary

Presbytery of Great Rivers
(309) 683-6980

Mark Your Calendar

Leadership Summit

Tuesday, December 15
10:00 - 2:00
PGR

OFFICE HOURS

Shortened Due to
Staff Vacations
Mon., Decemeber 21
thru
Wed., December 23

OFFICE CLOSED

Thursday, December 24
thru
Friday, January 1

OFFICE RE-OPENS

Monday, January 4

Clergy Group

Thursday, January 7
10:00 - 11:30
PGR

General Presbyter's Perspective

Rev. Susan Krummel

Ah, the annual Christmas pageant! Do you have one at your church? Have you enjoyed it yet or is it still to come?

I "saw" one on Sunday morning. Well, not really. A friend of mine was the director and she asked me to help the people who were sending the kids down the aisle at the right time. So, for most of worship I was helping shepherd the shepherds (and angels and sheep and other assorted animals) then as each group went down the aisle, I was turning around looking at the next ones to go. But it reminded me of all of the pageants in my past.

Now, when I was a child I was never in a pageant. I don't think that it was as popular then. I also attended a church where children were never in worship. So, all of my pageant experience is as a pastor/director of these extravaganzas. From children throwing up just before they go on, to those who forget their lines that they knew cold just before the service began, to those who wrap the microphone cord around two or three other people as they are trying to use it so that an adult has to go and extract the whole group, I think I have seen it all--at least until next year!

Why the emphasis on Christmas pageants during worship in December? As a former pastor who was also the mother of young children, running a small town charity Christmas gift event, getting ready to host my whole

Elder Training

Saturday, January 9
8:30 - 3:00
First, Lewistown

Visioning Council

Thursday, January 14
9:30 - 2:30
PGR

Elder Training

Saturday, January 16
8:30 - 3:00
United, Woodhull

OFFICE CLOSED

Martin Luther King, Jr.
Birthday
Monday, January 18

Administrative Council

Wednesday, January 20
9:30 - 2:30
PGR

Elder Training

Saturday, January 23
8:30 - 3:00
United, Peoria

Nominating Committee

Tuesday, January 26
10:00 - 2:00
PGR

COM

Tuesday, January 26
10:00 - 3:00
Northminster, Peoria

family for Christmas, stretching short dollars to provide for all of the trimmings of Christmas and on and on, I know that one of the motivations is to give the pastor a break from preaching one Sunday as she or he is trying to get his/her own family ready for the big day! It is also a good way, of course, to showcase the children who can be kind of "hidden" on most Sundays, either because you cannot see them when they sit in the pews or because they are in Sunday School during worship or because they are usually not around on Sunday mornings. Then again, it is a way for the kids to remember the story of Christmas as they act out the characters. The story, that is, in the way that we usually like to tell it. After all, there is not even a donkey in the Biblical Christmas story, let alone a lowing cow.

Maybe the children's pageant masks for us what the story of the birth of Jesus really focuses on in the Bible. Mary and Joseph had been forced by the Roman occupiers to go a long way at an inconvenient time. Even before that, when Mary was told that she would be the one to be the mother of the Savior for whom the world had waited, she sang a song celebrating God who would raise up the poor and bring down the powerful. After her baby was born, they were visited by shepherds--not the most sought-after guests in the maternity ward. They were, in fact, the very kind of people about whom Mary had sung after her visit from Gabriel. This is a story about the world being turned upside down. The Romans may look like the most powerful ones in this story. But, this little baby will become the One in whom we will all learn once and for all in a world-changing way who is really in charge.

That pretty or noisy or funny or surprising tableau presented by the children makes us feel safe and warm inside, reminds us of wonderful Christmases past and makes us nostalgic for years gone by. But, the story of a baby born to a woman who recognized that this little one would change the world is so much more. It is the story of the One who calls us forward in peace to love and serve the Lord who calls us to join him in turning the world upside down.

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.

Bloomington, [Second Presbyterian Church](#)

Bloomington, [St. Luke Union Church](#)

Buffalo, [Buffalo Hart Presbyterian Church](#)

Buffalo Prairie, Buffalo Prairie Presbyterian Church

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.

January 9 RSVP before January 4 **(21 days left to RSVP)** @ First Pres., Lewistown
January 16 RSVP before January 7 **(24 days left to RSVP)** @ United, Woodhull

New Online UMRC Catalog!!!

The entire catalog of the United Media Resource Center is now **online and searchable** to assist congregations and persons within The Presbytery of Great Rivers with their resource needs.

[Click here](#) for the online catalog site which provides a variety of search options.

Request items by putting them in a cart, clicking on the Checkout button, filling out the request form, and clicking on the Submit Request button, which emails the request to the UMRC. Please note that requests are not confirmed until you get a return email from the UMRC saying items are available for the requested dates.

All UMRC items are free to borrow; the only cost to churches is the cost to mail items back to the UMRC.

This online catalog is a brand-new feature -- please spend some time exploring it and let me know what you think of it. If you have problems using it, let me know; there may be something fixable to make it better for everyone.

*** Please note that the UMRC will be closed December 19 - January 3 *
Wishing all a blessed and safe holiday season!**

[Jill Stone](#), United Media Resource Center director
phone: 217-529-2744

It Might Be You!

Who is the most creative person you know when it comes to planning worship? (It might be you.) As we move into a new way of doing presbytery meetings, we need to gather a group that thinks in new ways about how to go about worship in a non-traditional setting and in a Reformed way. Do you know of someone who might like to work on this, who is available during the day, and who could meet once or twice before each presbytery meeting this year? If so, please let [Sue Krummel](#) know who that person is.

Is Your Church 150 Years Or Older?

In 2010, the Illinois State Historical Society plans to recognize congregations that are over 150 years old. There is an application available on the [Illinois State Historical Society website](#). You will need to provide documentation of the age of your congregation and there is a \$50 application fee. They will be giving a special award including a certificate, a complimentary one-year membership in the Society, an invitation to a special awards banquet at Wheaton College, and statewide recognition. The awards will be given at the 31st annual Illinois History Symposium at Wheaton College. The theme for this year is "Abolition: The Spark that Ignited the Second American Revolution." As you may know, some of the Presbyterian churches in Illinois were made up of people who were sympathetic to slavery and some were established by abolitionists to help to insure that Illinois did not become a slave state.

Many of the congregations in Great Rivers are more than 150 years old. We even have quite a few that are over 175 years old. It would be good to have a significant representation of Presbyterians at this event. *There is a January 15, 2010, deadline for the application.*

Needed - Grant Writer

Are you an experienced grant writer? Would you be willing to help people in the churches of Great Rivers when and if they decide to apply for grants? If so, please contact [Sue Krummel](#) and we can talk about what that help might look like!

Do You WANT Your Church to Grow?

SAVE THESE DATES.

April 23 & 24, 2010

[Click here](#) for more information and [Brochure](#)



Women of Faith Awards

The Women of Faith Awards, sponsored by the Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries/Presbyterian Women ministry area, are given during a breakfast at General Assembly. They recognize women of accomplishment whose Christian faith informs their work. The 2010 theme is: **Women with a Peaceful Heart: Guiding Paths of Peace**. Nominations are being sought for women who help the church grow in its witness and commitment to peacemaking.

[Nomination Form](#)

Please share this information with your church and help locate women whose lives give witness to their commitment to Jesus Christ. **Nominations must be postmarked by January 18, 2010.**

Presbyterian Stewardship Conference - Stewardship Kaleidoscope

March 15-17, 2010

Indianapolis, IN

[Click here](#) for more information.

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, please contact [Julie](#) by March 25.

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