



Presbytery of Great Rivers Newsletter

Good News From Great Rivers

December 20, 2011

[GP's Perspective](#)

[Clergy Group Openings](#)

[Annual Stats Due](#)

[Year End Payroll Tax Info](#)

[Elder Training](#)

[2011 Shared Mission](#)

[Presbytery Night at the Ballpark](#)

[In Sympathy](#)

[Hymnals Needed](#)

[United Media Resource Center](#)

[Organ Concert 12/30/11](#)

[Mission Opportunity - FSIL Nursing School](#)

[GIAC Security Essentials](#)

[Events Around the Presbytery & the PCUSA](#)

[Laurie's Green Tips](#)

Mark Your Calendar

DECEMBER

Presbytery Office CLOSED

Friday, December 23, 2011
thru
Monday, January 2, 2012

JANUARY

Clergy Group

Thursday, January 5
10:00am - 11:30am
PGR

Installation of Rev. Ed Loper

Sunday, January 8
4:00pm
LeRoy, First

Visioning Team

Tuesday, January 10
10:00am - 2:00pm
PGR

General Presbyter's Perspective Rev. Susan Krummel

My husband and I just got back from a week's vacation. You might wonder about ministers and vacation in December. Well, you probably realize that I have very few meetings in December and meetings make up most of my work. You are all busy with Advent and Christmas events in your congregations and do not really need extra meetings so we are glad in the presbytery office to catch our breath a little while you are busy. My husband is a pastor but was also able to get a week away since he has a very capable associate pastor and staff and since there are many special programs during worship in Advent at the church he serves which lightens the preaching load.

Yesterday as I was waiting to get on the third plane that would bring me home-a total travel time of about 24 hours-I was thinking about an idea that is at the heart of many of the ways we understand that the world has changed in the last few years. Mostly because of the internet and the kind of immediate access that we all have to information and communication, there has been a shift away from the idea of relying on an "expert." Many of us believe that we are our own experts in areas of our lives where we would never have considered ourselves in that light a few decades ago. For instance, our travelling group did not use a travel agent for a trip that involved six different flights, a rental car, a resort, etc. Instead, we booked online, we used the GPS's on our phones to find our way around and looked up places to eat, shop and visit on Google maps once we got there. For congregations and denominations this feeling that we do not need experts anymore is a part of the move away from being involved in organized religion in the same way our parents and grandparents were. People believe that they can find their own path to spiritual fulfillment and find answers to their spiritual and religious questions apart from a gathering of other believers.

But as I sat there waiting for a plane-with the crew for that plane sitting with all of us since there was a problem with the actual plane we were supposed to board-I realized that we still need experts. Although we booked the flights and made the plans ourselves, we were not going to fly the plane ourselves. We still wanted to have someone who had training and experience and knowledge that was not available to us. I was glad that there were two pilots and a flight attendant who had all of those things who would be in charge once we boarded the plane (which we eventually did); it was good that it was not a kind of self-service event without experts.

So, even in this world where we do not rely on experts the way we once did, what is the continued role of the congregation and the denomination? What do we bring as leaders of congregations that a person could not provide for him or herself? What is the training that we have as ruling and teaching elders that provides something in the spiritual and religious journey on which we all find ourselves that provides a reason for us to gather together to worship and learn? And what is it about a denomination to which we once turned for curriculum

Elder Training

Saturday, January 14
8:30am - 3:00pm
Woodhull, United

Presbytery Office CLOSED

Monday, January 16
Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr

Administration Team

Wednesday, January 18
10:00am - 2:00pm
PGR

Elder Training

Saturday, January 21
8:30am - 3:00pm
Bloomington, St. Luke

COM

Tuesday, January 24
10:00am - 3:00pm
Peoria, First Federated

Nominating Committee

Wednesday, January 25
10:00am - 2:00pm
PGR

Elder Training

Saturday, January 28
8:30am - 3:00pm
Lewistown, First

Ordination of Chip Roland

Sunday, January 29
3:00pm
Peoria, United

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

and hymnbooks and mission and guidance about how we should respond to big events in the world-all of which I see congregations doing on their own with no input from the denomination-what is it that a denomination brings that is still important in the lives of believers? Questions to ponder as you light all of the candles on the Advent wreath and gather together for worship on Christmas morning and set your goals for the year ahead.

Clergy Group Openings

Debbie Dornaus, M.A., LCPC is offering a support group opportunity for PGR pastors. The purpose of the group is to provide a safe, non-judgemental community in which colleagues can share the joys and challenges of the call to ministry. Emphasis will be placed on self-care both personally and professionally. The group will meet the first Thursday of each month from 10:00am to 11:30am at the Presbytery Office. The cost is \$150.00 for 10 meetings. That will allow for a snow day if needed, and perhaps a vacation month. The group will be limited to 10, and there are still openings. For more information, or to sign up for the group, contact Debbie at 309-693-0038.

Debbie is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor who works in private practice in Peoria and Morton. She has recently been leading a clergy group for PGR, and is an active Presbyterian. Debbie is the daughter of a Presbyterian minister, so has the experience of being part of a clergy family. She has over twenty-five years of clinical experience.

ATTENTION Clerks of Session Annual Stats are Due February 14, 2012

Your packets, containing this information, were mailed at the beginning of December. If you do not have the packet in hand, you can log onto the presbytery website and print everything you need.

Let's aim for completing your Annual Stats by the end of January and have 100% participation this year.

[Basic Church Information Link](#)

[Clerk's Annual Questionnaire for Year Ending December 31, 2011 Link](#)

Year End Payroll Tax Information

If your church provides life insurance in excess of \$50,000 for pastors or employees, don't forget that this is a taxable benefit. The imputed income should be reported on the employee's W2 in box 12, code C. [The Board of Pensions has a handy calculator](#) that will help you determine what amount you need to include on the W2 and if applicable pay FICA on. If you have employees that receive life insurance and are subject to FICA, it's a good idea to include this figure in one of your last payrolls of the year so FICA can be withheld.

This is also a good time to order W2s and/or 1099s if you need them. Go to the [IRS website](#) and they will mail you free forms. You may also want to consider [filing W2s electronically](#), this link gives you information on doing this for free.

Amy Gardner

Elder Training

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).

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 14, 2012 @ Woodhull, United **RSVP by** January 5
January 21, 2012 @ Bloomington, St. Luke **RSVP by** January 12
January 28, 2012 @ Lewistown, First **RSVP by** January 19
February 4, 2012 @ Springfield, Third **RSVP by** January 26
February 11, 2012 @ Peoria, First Federated **RSVP by** February 2

2011 Shared Mission

Shared mission postmarked by December 31, 2011 will be applied to churches' 2011 pledges. Shared mission mailed after the first of the year will be applied to 2012 pledges. If you have not yet submitted a 2012 Shared Mission Pledge Form, it's never too late so send that in. Having Pledge forms completed and sent in helps us with our budgeting process.

[Amy Gardner](#), Accountant
Presbytery of Great Rivers

Presbytery Night at the Ballpark

The date has been set! Mark your calendars now and join us for the last Presbytery Night at the Ballpark on **Friday, June 22, 2012** at 7:00pm. We will have a limited number of tickets this time, it will be first come first served.

[Click Here for Letter, Ticket Order Form and Poster](#)

In Sympathy

A retired minister member of the presbytery, the Rev. Chester "Chet" O'Neal, was remembered after his death in a memorial service on Monday, December 05, 2011. The Rev. Susan Ryder provided the remembrance of Chet and included many of his own words. Several people at the funeral requested a [copy of her remarks](#).

Hymnals Needed

First Presbyterian Church in Virden, IL is in need of 40-80 hymnals. Their current hymnals are "ancient and falling apart." They are interested in hymnals for which they can find and/or purchase CDs to accompany the songs. Virden, First is willing to pay for shipping. If your church has extra hymnals and can help, please contact [Sue Sawers, CRE](#).

United Media Resource Center

If your church is interested in a membership with UMRC, you can learn more on the [UMRC website](#).

Organ Concert

Eric Plutz, organist, will give an organ concert on...

Friday, December 30, 2011

at 7:00 p.m.

South Park Presbyterian Church

1501 30th Street, Rock Island, IL

Eric is currently the principal organist at the chapel of Princeton University. He earned a bachelor of music degree, graduating magna cum laude from Westminster Choir College in 1989 and a master of music degree from the Eastman School of Music in 1991. Eric, son of Harriet and the late Dan Plutz, grew up in South Park Church. This free

event is one of several in South Park's year-long celebration of their upcoming 100th anniversary.

A Mission Opportunity for Your Church or Sunday School

FSIL Nursing School, Leogane, Haiti

Sometimes churches look for something meaningful to do in mission, something that is new to the church, and is "do-able" while at the same time transformative for those on the receiving end. Here's such a project.

In January 2012, it will be two years since the earthquake struck Haiti. Most of us remember the horror of realizing a country with little infrastructure now was facing more suffering. Leogane, Haiti, at the epicenter of the earthquake, felt 55 aftershocks and lost 85% of all their buildings; you see places where the roads buckled, where the buildings that remained standing broke in two. Like the Psalmist cries, "therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change." Leogane, you may recall from news accounts, was cut off from the rest of Haiti, no one could get news of them, how the people there were fairing. No news was getting in or out.

In Isaiah we read, "For the Lord will comfort Zion, the Lord will comfort all her waste places and will make her wilderness like Eden." After the earthquake, the people of Leogane needed hope and comfort, and they found it, in a school yard. The school yard was that of the FSIL nursing school, a school funded by the PC(USA) and the Episcopal Church.

Evens Joicin was a nursing student at Leogane's FSIL nursing school when the January 2010 earthquake hit, and he's now an instructor there. Evens helped organize the student nurses as over 5,000 people arrived on the nursing school grounds. The sound of human beings wailing in grief was in the air, people were trying to save their family members, without the help of back hoes or earth moving equipment. On the nursing school grounds, which you can see on the web and on YouTube, the scene looked like something from a Civil War battle scene, with wounded everywhere. Evens said that people wanted reassurance, a hand to hold if they were really ill, someone to be with them in their pain, or a cup of water, and whatever medical care they could get. Evens' own home, which he shared with his mother, was destroyed, but he felt called to help organize the student nurses, and to organize mobile clinics. These student nurses are credited with saving countless lives by providing care to those who arrived seeking succor.

The executive director of the Haiti Nursing Foundation, Marcia Lane, says FSIL Nursing School has "the goal of finding individuals and organizations that will sponsor a nursing student. There are 15 churches in the U.S. doing so, a number of organizations, and about 25 individuals. This is the great need, and a logical way to make FSIL self-sustaining. We provide a student's name, and send photos and writing about twice a year. The total cost to support a student is \$3,000 a year, but we do the sponsor program for donations of \$1,500 and up if the donor wants to be involved. It's a great connection to something long-term in Haiti."

There is a Presbyterian Disaster Assistance film about the hospital, [Hospital St. Croix, in Leogane](#), where FSIL nurses do their clinicals, with a skilled OB/GYN Dr. Gladys Memnon at the helm.

FSIL Nursing School has connections with the University of Michigan and is starting an on-line Master of Nursing program with Rutgers University.

[FSIL website](#)

For more information:

Marcia E. Lane, MA

Executive Director

Haiti Nursing Foundation

734-353-9565

(Global Information Assurance Certification)

Having recently been accredited in computer [Security Essentials](#) the Rev. Sue Krummel asked if I could put down a few things for the Presbytery Newsletter.

1. Keep your computer software patched. This includes the Operating System (Windows, Apple or Linux) as well as all your applications and programs. There are some software programs that help you keep up-to-date if you would like assistance (Google "Secunia Personal Software Inspector"). This will inspect your computer at least once a week.
2. Have an administrator account on your computer that you do not normally run under, especially for surfing the web or working on social media sites (Twitter, Facebook, Google+, and such.) This will force you to authorize any changes made to your computer but will keep you much safer. As a general rule, minimize administrator privileges on user accounts. If you do not know what I am talking about here, have a computer savvy family member or good friend set one up for you.
3. Be extraordinary careful about clicking links or opening files attached to emails that you were not expecting, even from people or email addresses you normally get correspondence from without checking with them to be sure that they personally sent that to you. If it is someone with whom you regularly send links or files, have a code word that you both can put in the subject line for verification, such as the name of a lesser known prophet or a figure from church history.
4. If you are shopping/banking online or anything that would use a credit or debit card, be sure before you enter you card # to look at the address bar of your browser. Make sure that it begins with https:\\, not just http:\\ . The "s" at the end designates a secure connection. If that is not present, just close the browser and start over.
5. A good virus software program is extremely helpful. Microsoft Security Essentials is very good, runs smoothly and is free.
6. Be very careful of all games and other "apps" on social networking sites. These have a history of carrying malware/spyware and can cause harm to your computer and your reputation.
7. If you have a home or office wireless network, enable the wireless security and protect it with a good password. This will keep random folks from hitching some free internet and protect you from unauthorized surfing.
8. Safeguard all computer accounts with a password, especially those in church offices that can have multiple users and laptops/tablets. If needed, consider a very low privilege account with no password for public use. Under no circumstances should that account have access to church documents or financial information.

If this type of information is valuable I can submit some suggestions for making and remembering passwords as well. I have tried to pare this down, but I know it is lengthy. Feel free to split it into two segments if needed. This is truly the tip of an iceberg in computer security.

Thanks Sue for this opportunity,
Rev. William Swaar

Indian Point Presbyterian Church
24562 Indian Point Ave.
Athens, IL 62613

Events Around the Presbytery & the PCUSA

Visit Scotland! 06/13/12 thru 6/22/12

Galesburg First Presbyterian Church is celebrating their 175th anniversary in 2012, and as part of that celebration will be taking a trip to Scotland from June 13-22, 2012. Areas they will be seeing include: Glasgow, Stirling, Iona, Loch Ness, Inverness, Aberdeen, St. Andrews and Edinburgh. For more information contact [Linda Hinrichs](#) or call

(309)342-6090. You may also see the website [Casterbridge Educational Tours](#) for more details.

2012 Presbytery Night at the Ballpark 06/22/12

The date has been set! Mark your calendars now and join us for the last Presbytery Night at the Ballpark on Friday, June 22, 2012 at 7:00pm. We will have a limited number of tickets this time, it will be first come first served.

[Click Here for Letter, Ticket Order Form and Poster](#)



Farewell for Now

By Laurie Vial, Energy Consultant

This will be my last column for the Presbytery of Great Rivers as my position has been cut due to budget constraints. I have enjoyed the last two years more than I could have anticipated when I accepted the job. I have met so many wonderful people following God's call. I have become even more passionate about our planet and taking better care of it. And I have enjoyed helping our congregations save money so they can use their funds for better purposes than mailing big checks to the utility companies.

Before I go any further I must give a special mention to Mark Cordes of the Eureka Presbyterian Church who has been my right hand person on energy audits - volunteering his time to travel with me to the churches in all corners of Presbytery as well as writing the reports and lending his expertise. I have learned a lot from Mark and admire him for sharing his professional skills in this manner. The churches who benefited from his knowledge were truly blessed. We are finishing up a few final reports so don't panic, if we conducted an audit you will receive a full report.

I also want to thank the dedicated staff at the Presbytery who work hard behind the scenes. I've appreciated their office, accounting and computer skills - and their sense of humor.

Like so many journeys in life I feel I have gotten more in return than I gave. I have so enjoyed connecting with church members and clergy during our energy audits and special consulting projects. I am not disappearing completely so feel free to e-mail me at lbv@ctechinternet.com to bounce an idea off me or ask a question. And who knows, our paths will hopefully cross again in the future. With my full time job with the Illinois Conference of Churches I will still be attending Assembly once a year.

I'd like to leave you with a few final thoughts. Our goal has always been to motivate you to examine the life of the church and your personal life through a green filter. Think about what you purchase and use and make the greenest choice that you can afford and that you can live with. For example, Styrofoam cups at coffee hour or "real" ones that you wash and use over and over.

Watch the thermostats. If you do nothing else at home or at church, switch to programmable thermostats, program them and lock them up. If you need a copy of my column on thermostats contact the Presbytery office and they can e-mail it. The same goes for my column on florescent lighting and lightbulb choices.

Check out the [Go Green page on the Presbytery website](#) for past columns, resources, links and Christian Education materials.

Check out Faith in Place and consider creating a Green Team at your church, or become an Energy Star congregation or become an Earth Care Congregation through PCUSA.

Be greener for the next generation and the generation after that. Inspire the younger generation to live greener and more in harmony with nature.

Let's all strive to be good stewards of God's earth.