



August 2008

Presbytery of Plains & Peaks

August 2008 Presbytery Meeting Highlights

- † The Special Administrative Review Committee was dissolved with an expression of the Presbytery's gratitude.
- † The Reverend Stephen Brown was granted Pastor Emeritus status at Family of Christ Presbyterian Church in Greeley, Colorado.
- † The 2009 Per Capita and Mission Budgets were set for 2009 - exclusive of Personnel amounts to be determined.
- † Presbytery approved a per capita assessment of \$21.15 as a basic assessment with a \$2.15 supplemental per capita assessment for legal fees.

Pastoral Transitions

- † The Reverend Peg MacGowan has resigned her pastorate at Timnath Presbyterian Church in Timnath, Colorado, effective June 30, 2008.
- † The Reverend Gary Johnson has accepted a new call to Eastminster Presbyterian Church in Wichita, Kansas, effective September 1, 2008.
- † The Reverend Bob Dooling has resigned as co-pastor of Mtn. View Presbyterian Church in Loveland, Colorado, to enter into retirement effective July 31, 2008.
- † The Reverend Judy Wrought has been granted the status of Honorably Retired.
- † The Reverend Eldin Wells was dismissed to the Presbytery of Central Nebraska, effective April 8, 2008.

Indian Peaks Lawsuit

The Presbytery of Plains and Peaks has been awarded sole title and possession of the former Covenant Presbyterian Church property at 9880 Baseline Road in Lafayette, CO in a decision filed July 23 in Boulder District Court. The decision came three months to the day after the conclusion of the trial in which the Presbytery accused Indian Peaks Community Church and Pastor Georges Houssney of wrongfully amending corporate documents and refinancing loans on the property. The church disputed that the property belonged to the presbytery following the dissolution of Covenant Presbyterian Church in January 2000. They refused to sign a lease or to accept settlement offers from the Presbytery, and filed countersuits against the Presbytery claiming ownership. Indian Peaks had been formed from the remnants of the former Covenant church congregation.

Presbytery of Plains & Peaks

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Presbyterian Women

Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery will be meeting at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Ft. Collins, Colorado on Thursday, September 25, 2008 at 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for their annual Fall Gathering. The theme is "Mission and Community". Alice Koerner will be speaking about her recent trip with the U.S.A. Mission Experience group.

As part of the celebration of the 20th anniversary of Presbyterian Women, those women that have served as officers for Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery will be honored.

All women in the Presbyterian Church are invited to attend, it isn't necessary that you belong to a formal Presbyterian Women's group. Round up a carload and come join us for an informative and fun faith filled day. For more information, contact Carol Heltenberg at 970-848-5812.

DON'T MISS . . . the Elder/Deacon Training

The Congregational Leadership and Equipping Workgroup (CLEW) will be sponsoring an Elder/Deacon training "road show" in September to assist pastors and sessions in the training of new officers. It will feature Stephanie Jackson, coordinator of Christian Formation in the Theology, Worship, and Education Unit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) In Louisville, Kentucky.

Stephanie will be stressing the "call" aspect of being an elder/deacon in the Presbyterian Church. We are unique since we are the only denomination that ordains lay leaders on a par with our Ministers of Word and Sacrament. She will also touch on the work of an ordained officer in the Presbyterian Church, whether it be as an elder or a deacon.

The three workshops will be identical, so pastors and officers may attend any of the three. They will be evening and one Saturday event so that those gainfully employed outside of the church can attend without having to take vacation time to do so. Thursday evening's event will be on September 4 from 6:30-9:00 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church in Sterling, Colorado. Dinner will NOT be served. Friday evening (September 5) the event will be at First Presbyterian Church in Bridgeport, Nebraska with a bar-b-que dinner ahead of the 6:30-9:00 p.m. event (call the church for dinner information - 308-262-0134). The third venue will be at Mtn. View Presbyterian Church in Loveland, Colorado on Saturday, September 6 from 9:30 a.m. - noon.

Don't miss this opportunity to enhance the training that you as elders and deacons receive from your pastor, and pastors, take advantage of a "visiting fireperson" to add to what you already do in training your ordained officers.

Follow-up to the Sexual Misconduct Event at the May Presbytery Meeting

First Presbyterian Church in Gordon, Nebraska was unable to attend the May educational event at the May Presbytery meeting, so they have requested that the Congregational Leadership and Equipping Workgroup (CLEW) put on a similar event for the community of Gordon, Nebraska. Since sexual misconduct can occur in many areas of life, not just at the church, the Reverend Judy McQuiston, in planning the event, has included The Ministerial Alliance, the school district, county helping agencies, and other churches in the area. Three speakers from the Presbytery will present various aspects of sexual misconduct both as it affects adults and children, how to deal with it when it happens, and how to put in place safeguards to prevent it from happening.

All Presbyterian churches in Nebraska are invited to join with First Presbyterian Church in Gordon and to send pastors, elders, deacons, Christian Educators, and others in leadership capacities. If you have an interest in doing a similar event in you church or community, please contact CLEW, c/o Pat Waltermire - 303-651-2454 - pat.kent.waltermire@presbynet.org or the Presbyterian Mission Center.

Mission Advocate - Lois Vermeer

Lois has visited with several mission committees with very different but productive conversations at each meeting. Just a reminder that she is willing and would appreciate the opportunity to visit with any mission committee in our Presbytery. These meetings are a two way conversation - - she needs to learn from each of you, as well as to offer assistance with any programs, or to obtain information of various mission opportunities for you.

Highlands Happenings



As summer camp wraps us, Highlands moves into our busy season of guest groups. We look forward to hosting family reunions, Lutheran Bishops from Madagascar, and an international peace program for high school students. Our beautiful facility will provide a unique opportunity for these folks, and many others to worship and work together. Through our ministry, the work of Christ will be enhanced throughout the world.

The Highlands Fall Work Day is scheduled for Saturday, October 4th, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. We had 25 folks join us for a spring workday and we had a great time! To register to help, please call Laura (303-747-2888) or email (laura@highlandscamp.org) her.

Don't miss the opportunity to be at Highlands this fall . . .

- † Senior High Retreat - November 7-9, 2008 - "Peace in the Chaos" . . . join us as we explore the concept of finding the peace of Christ in a chaotic world.
- † Fall Foliage Fantasy - September 22-24, 2008 - Ann opportunity for adults to come to Highlands and sit back, relax, and ooh and aah at Colorado's fall gold. Register on-line at www.highlandscamp.org.
- † 24/6: a Gathering of Men - November 21-22, 2008 - A 24-hour gathering to help men take inventory of the friends they can count on and to strategize about gathering men in their lives whom they would consider friends - speaker Dennis Ondrejka.

Don't forget to mark your calendar for our annual Christmas Party on Saturday, December 6th from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. We have 18 quilts pledged for the Quilt Auction that will be part of this event. We'll also be celebrating our volunteers. You won't want to miss this special celebration!



Highlands will begin offering Elderhostel programs in the fall of 2008

Oct. 29 - Nov. 1, 2008 - Rocky Mountain Halloween: The Stanley Hotel and Other Things That Go Bump in the Night

Dec. 26th – Dec. 30th, 2008 - Rocky Mountain Holiday: Re-Discover Old Time Traditions in a Getaway With Your Grandchild

March 8-13, 2009 - Rocky Mountain National Park: Winter Wonderland

April 5-10, 2009 - World Affairs Conference: Reflecting in the Rockies

May 3-8, 2009 - Emerge into Spring at Rocky Mountain National Park

August 9-14, 2009 - An Intergenerational Elderhostel: Summer Spectacular in the Colorado Rockies

Be sure to go to www.elderhostel.org today to register!



At General Assembly, Way-Points, a cooperative organization of 13 Presbyterian Camp and Retreat sites was launched. In 2009 Highlands, and 12 other sites will begin offering programming for adults and intergenerational family groups. Highlands will be offering these programs:

Rocky Mountain Fourth of July Family Vacation - July 2-5, 2009

Relax in our majestic mountain center for your vacation. Located in the heart of the National Forest with spectacular views into Rocky Mountain National Park, Highlands is the perfect place for your summer family vacation. Activities will include horse-back riding, worship, canoeing, fireworks, Bible study, and exploring Rocky Mountain National Park.

21st Century Thought in Astronomy, Geology, and Theology - August 16-21, 2009

What are those lights in the night sky? How did that mountain get so tall or that lake so deep? Who or what created it all? Join astronomers Drs. Irene and Steve Little; geologist Dr. Gary Wallace; and the Reverend Brad Rohwer to explore the sky, the earth, and God's wonderful creation as they play out in the Rocky Mountains.

Longs Peak: Towering Treasure of Rocky Mountain National Park - September 27-October 2, 2009

From early climbing expeditions to the creation of Rocky Mountain National Park, the story of 14,259-foot Longs Peak boasts colorful characters (like Enos Mills), technological innovators (like F.O. Stanley), and artistic inspiration. Visit the ranger station, tour museums, and hear a National Park Ranger and others talk about this wonderful peak.

Be sure to go to www.way-points.org and check out all 39 of the programs that will be offered around the nation.

Interesting Church News

- ✦ **Kimball Presbyterian Church - VBS was held on July 6-10 from 5:30-8:00 p.m. This was a combined Bible School for the First English Lutheran Church, the Trinity Methodist Church, Kimball Presbyterian Church - all in Kimball and the Calvary Methodist Church in Bushnell. All churches participated with teachers, staff, and expenses, including food for the evening meal. About 58 children were registered with an average daily attendance of 50. The program was "God's Big Back Yard". All activities were outside, including supper (thanks to cooperative weather). The Presbyterian Church has the biggest back yard of all the churches so it was a wonderful place for this event. The director, assistant director, and members of the Presbyterian Church coordinated the program this year. The churches have been rotating VBS between the facilities for several years, as all churches have had a declining Sunday School attendance. This is a great way to provide an excellent program in our small community and do the Lord's work with Christian brothers and sisters.**
- ✦ **First United Presbyterian Church - Loveland - PASSPORT TO ADVENTURE Music for Missions Camp - Youth (K-4th grade) are invited to take a "trip" to the mission field to learn more about how music works and how music is used to tell the stories of our faith. Saturday's - September 13, 20, and 27th in the church basement - 10:30-11:15 a.m. - Youth will earn "mission money" with their attendance - at the end of camp the money will be given to a practicing musical missionary group.**
- ✦ **Buckhorn Presbyterian Church - Masonville - is having its 6th annual Gospel Music Festival on Saturday, August 16th. The music starts at 10:00 a.m. and ends at 7:00 p.m. There is a different gospel group every hour. There are 17 vendors, and the church will be selling bar-b-que sandwiches and plates, hamburgers, and drinks. The outdoor amphitheatre has been renovated and is beautiful. The amphitheatre has been dedicated to a person who was a very active member of our church and passed away a couple of years ago. The festival is free to all with a "love offering" for those who want to contribute to the travel expenses of the music groups.**
- ✦ **Community Presbyterian Church - Sedgwick - New carpet has been installed in the basement area courtesy of a local foundation. VBS was held August 4-8th. The participants of the VBS shared a program during the morning worship hour on August 10th. The theme for this years school centered on "Noah and the Ark".**
- ✦ **Light Memorial Presbyterian Church - Sidney - will be holding their 14th Annual Hog Roast and Raffle on September 28, 2008 at the Cheyenne County Fairgrounds. We will be serving from 11:00 - 2:00. The menu consists of roast pork, homemade baked beans, potato salad, along with a variety of other salads, cake, and brownies. We will have several raffle items as well as door prizes. The Lamplighters also sponsor tables of crafts and gift items, along with homemade candy and baked items, or other goodies or you to buy. So come on in to Sidney for a great afternoon of fellowship!**
- ✦ **Timnath Presbyterian Church - will celebrate their 125th anniversary on August 16-17, with an open house, chuckwagon dinner, and hymn sing on Saturday, beginning at 3:00 p.m. On Sunday, they will have a 10:00 a.m. worship service, followed by lunch and their annual Ice Cream Social from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Please join us. They will also be hosting their Country Church Bazaar from 9:00-3:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 4, 2008.**

From the Lions' Den

In the aftermath of the General Assembly held in San Jose, California, in June, there has been a lot of misinformation about the actions related to ordination standards and sexuality. Let me share my best understanding of what did and didn't happen.

The Assembly did not change the fidelity and chastity standards for ordination found in G-6.0106b. However, the Assembly took the following three actions:

(1) The Assembly amended its 2006 authoritative interpretation of G-6.0108 (so-called "Recommendation 5") to declare the fidelity and chastity standard to be of equal (not greater) importance as other standards. This overrides the decision of the GA Permanent Judicial Commission declaring the fidelity and chastity standard to have unique status, and not subject to "scrupling." The authoritative interpretation also permits candidates to declare "scruples" of both belief and practice, also in contradiction to the GAPJC ruling. This could potentially create the situation in which sessions and presbyteries could approve the examination for ordination of some self-affirming, practicing homosexuals. However, the following still hold true: (a) G-6.0106b still prohibits sessions and presbyteries from ordaining and installing "persons refusing to repent of any practice the confessions call sin" (this is a distinct action from the approval of an examination for ordination); (b) persons who may yet be ordained are still subject to disciplinary action for any behavior that violates the standards for office; (c) the new authoritative interpretation will be tested again in the courts of the church; until such time no one truly knows the outcome and effect of the assembly action. Our presbytery's examination policy adopted in 2007 remains in effect and is unchanged by the 2008 GA actions.

(2) The Assembly rescinded the "definitive guidance" issued in 1978 and 1979 and the 1993 authoritative interpretation based on them. This has only symbolic significance unless the presbyteries vote to remove or significantly alter G-6.0106b, in which case it would remove any pre-existing impediments to the ordination of self-affirming, practicing, homosexuals.

(3) The Assembly sent to the presbyteries a proposed amendment to G-6.0106b which would replace the fidelity and chastity language with other language connecting the standards of office to the vows of ordination. Previous efforts to eliminate or change the provision failed in 1997 and 2001, both in our presbytery and denomination-wide. 87 of the 173 presbyteries must approve the change for it to take effect.

I strongly encourage churches not to take any unilateral actions in response to assembly's actions until we know more clearly what lasting meaning and effect they have, including ordaining persons in violation of G-6.0106b, or withholding per capita or other funds in protest of the action. Those who disagree with the assembly's actions are encouraged to use the processes for authoritative interpretation and constitutional amendment provided in our Constitution to effect orderly change within our polity.

