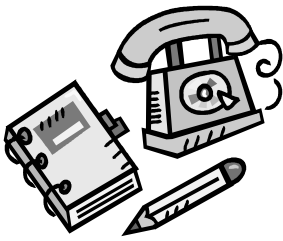


COMMUNITY CALL

Ministers: The People of God; Pastor: Rev. D. Matthew Stith
702 Sheyenne St., P.O. 546, West Fargo, ND 58078 701-282-4135 E-mail: office@cpcwf.org Web: http://cpcwf.org



DIRECTORY OF NAMES AND ADDRESSES

The 2006 Church Directory is in the initial stages of completion. There is a copy of the directory on the table in the narthex on which corrections can be made.

It is important to us that this book is as up-to-date and accurate as possible, so we're asking for everyone's help. Please take a moment to check your information and place a star next to it so that we know you've seen it. You can also call and leave a message on the answering machine at the church.

For friends of the church: Please check to see if your names are in the directory. If they are not, and you would like them to be, please put the information on the blank page at the back of the booklet.

Please do this promptly so that this directory can be ready for distribution the first part of March.

Thank You!
Delores Horn

PASTOR'S PEN

If you haven't already, in the coming weeks and months you will surely hear something about the latest episode in our denomination's continuing struggle over the standards that apply to those who seek to be ordained, as ministers, elders, or deacons, in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Since it is important for you, as members and friends of this church, to know about such things, and since our Session has acted to involve us in the issue in a particu-



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lar way, I am offering here what I hope will be a useful sketch of what's happening:

The PC(USA) has been struggling over ordination standards for a couple of decades, at least. The major (though not only) question motivating this struggle has been whether or not a person who is involved in a homosexual relationship can be ordained. The position of the church for centuries has been that such behavior, like any others that the Scriptures explicitly identify as sinful, disqualifies a person from ordination *as long as the behavior continues to be practiced without repentance*. In other words, since all people sin, sinful behavior does not disqualify a person from ordination. But continuing in a behavior that the Scriptures or our Confessions call sin, with no remorse, confession, or intention to reform with God's help has historically been a bar to ordained office. Despite numerous highly-charged debates on the subject in recent years, this standard remains in force, and is set forth in the *Book of Order*.

In 2001, the General Assembly of the PC (USA), seeking to move past the increasingly nasty fighting on this issue, established the Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church to try to work out a way for the church to live together in spite of our disagreements, and, as their title implies, to advance the peace, unity, and purity of the church in light of our current conflicts. The Task Force was made up of people from all sides of the ordination debate, and worked intensively together for years, finally publishing their report in 2005. The report offers a lengthy and very good discussion of the theological basics of who we are as Christians and Presbyterians in the



twenty-first century. It also offers a number of recommendations, which will be debated and acted upon by the General Assembly when it meets in July.

It is these recommendations that have raised the current ruckus. But, in order to understand the significance of what is proposed by the Task Force, one needs first to understand what an Authoritative Interpretation (AI) of the *Book of Order* is. In a nutshell, the General Assembly has the power to issue an AI to clarify precisely what a particular section of the *Book of Order* means. An AI is binding on the church, unless and until it is reversed or removed by a later General Assembly. Unlike the process for amending the *Book of Order*, there is no provision for the various Presbyteries to ratify such interpretations. Once the General Assembly issues an AI, it is, in effect, law for the church. Accordingly, this power is only to be used in clarifying what is meant by a provision, not to materially change the *Book of Order* itself.

At the core of the Task Force recommendations is a request that the General Assembly issue an AI of section G-6.0108 of the *Book of Order*, the section that sets forth the standards of behavior and lifestyle for candidates for ordination. This AI would interpret this section as meaning that each ordaining body (Presbytery or Session) can decide for itself whether a candidate for ordination has met the standards, and whether any departure from the standards is important enough to prohibit ordination. In short, each ordaining body could decide for itself which standards are authoritative, and which can be ignored (the so-called "local option").

Many people in the PC(USA) see this option as a useful compromise, a way for-

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ward from the current impasse. Others argue that, by making the standards more or less optional, the AI would basically reduce them to suggestions, opening the door for widespread ordination of practicing homosexuals in "pro-gay" presbyteries and churches. The publication of the Task Force report, it must be said, does not seem to have visibly increased the peace of the church on this point!

Each Presbytery has been asked to study, pray about, and discuss the report. Our own Presbytery will be having this discussion at our meeting of January 27 and 28. As part of that meeting, the Presbytery will hear from one of the Task Force members, and consider the report in small discussion groups. Owing to the nature of the recommendations, however, there is no opportunity for the Presbytery to approve or disapprove the report, and it will go on to General Assembly for action regardless.

After our own reading and discussion of the report, the Session of CPC has several serious objections to the recommendations of the Task Force:

We are troubled by what appears to us to be an overstepping of the appropriate use of Authoritative Interpretation. The report's recommendations would amount to a significant change in the way the church is governed, and such changes are appropriately made by amending the *Book of Order*, so that the Presbyteries have a chance to vote, up or down, on the changes.

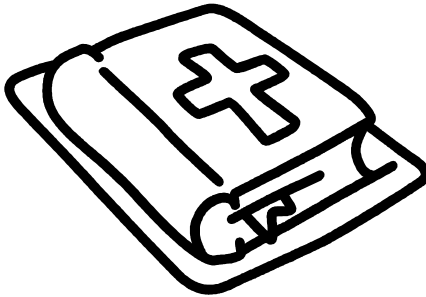
We are concerned about the corrosive effect that the "local option"

would have on our Presbyterian system. As one elder put it, if this AI is issued, "anything goes." There would no longer be any truly authoritative, church-wide standards for ordination.

We fear that, if enacted, the recommendations of the Task Force will not advance the peace, unity, and purity of the church. Indeed, it seems quite possible that enactment of the "local option" would lead, ultimately, to the splitting of the denomination, as presbyteries and churches would be forced to decide whether to acknowledge the ordination of people who were ordained by a body whose standards are different from their own. At best, there would be a steady series of nasty fights at the Presbytery level over whose ordinations are valid and whose are not.

As a result of these objections, we, along with the Sessions of the churches at Rolla/St. John, Minot, and Cavalier, have submitted an overture to the Presbytery. This is a proposal that, if approved by Presbytery, is sent on to the General Assembly and placed on the agenda of that meeting for action. Our overture calls for the GA to reject the Task Force recommendation that would institute the local option, and instead to issue an AI that clearly upholds the current interpretation of the relevant section of the *Book of Order*. We acknowledge that the Task Force did much fine work, and we respect their opinions. But, ultimately, we feel confident that our overture accurately reflects what God

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is calling us to be as the church. We believe firmly that the system currently in place for proposing changes to the Book of Order is the appropriate channel for any who wish to change our ordination standards, and we hope and pray that our work will help to keep that system in place. But above all, we pray that, no matter what we, or the Presbytery, or the Task Force, or the General Assembly do, God himself will work in power to advance the peace, unity, and purity of his church, for it is, finally, only God who can do so for certain.

Addendum:

On January 28, the Presbytery of the Northern Plains defeated the overture that was submitted by our Session, along with the Sessions from Rolla/St. John, Minot, Cavalier, and Bathgate, by a vote of 32-26. Our overture will not be sent to the General Assembly. I believe this decision of Presbytery to have been wrong, but I pray that it will be proven right, and that the results will be positive. I am proud of our Session's hard work and courage in standing up for what we believe to be true.

VALENTINES DINNER

Come join us on Sunday, February 12 at 6:00 for a delicious Valentine's Day Dinner. Andrew and Janine Steele of Indigo catering will be serving with the help of Soul Train waiters and waitresses. Reserve your spot by signing up in the narthex.*

Adults - \$10.00
Children 3-12 - \$5.00
under 3 - free

All proceeds will go to Community Presbyterian Church.

payment is desired with reservations

**FEBRUARY MISSION
GIVING PROJECT:
BABY ITEMS**


Just think of those cute cuddly babies. Is there anything more precious that God gives us? This month we are out to collect for those babies that are born to Teen Moms.

Any baby items are welcome; however, the major items they need are baby shampoos, soap, and lotions. So our challenge to the church is to see if we can donate 50 bottles of shampoos and lotions. Bring in your donations anytime during the month of February.

We went way over our goal of 25 cans of coffee for New Life Center for January. Thanks to all of you who gave! We love how our faithful church gives every month! We wish you all a sweet Valentine's Day too!

**COMING SOON...
BABY SHOWER**

Everyone is invited to a Baby Shower for Gabriel Gross, son of Angela Maesse and Mike Gross, grandson of Susan and Bob Gross. It will be on Sunday, February 19, from 2:00 to 3:30 at the church.

Gabriel is registered at Target.

Please RSVP to Mary Jo Moorhead (277-1414).

**NEW IMPROVED
SUNDAY SCHOOL
SCHEDULE**


Feb. 26	Memorization Sunday
Apr. 2	Memorization Sunday
Apr. 16	Easter *No Sunday School*
May 14	Memorization Sunday
May 21	Carnival ***Last Day of Sunday School***



JANUARY CLERK'S CORNER

On January 9th the Session met in a special meeting to consider which financing plan should be used for Project Open Door.

The Session voted to accept the financing plan offered by the Presbyterian Church, USA's Building and Loan Program and requested that a letter of commitment be issued to our church. It was also decided to conduct another capital campaign in 2008 to help retire the debt for Project Open Door.

On January 18th the Session and Trustees held their regular monthly meeting. A special meeting of the Session is scheduled for February 21st to approve the bids for construction of Project Open Door.

A request to hold a baby shower for Gabriel Gross, son of Michael Gross and Angela Maesse (grandson of Bob and Susan Gross), on Sunday, February 19th from 2:30 - 3:30 in the fellowship hall was approved. The shower will be hosted by Mary Jo Moorhead.

The following requests for activities for Soul Train were approved:

Valentine's Day dinner on February 12 at 6:00 p.m. Price: \$10 for adults, \$5.00 for kids 3 - 12, kids under 3 free. Andrew Steele will prepare the meal.

Approved the request to allow youth from our church to attend the Youth Presbytery Retreat in Jamestown on March 30 - April 2. A decision about financing will be determined at a later day when more information is available.

Approved the request to hold an Easter Egg Extravaganza on April 9 from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. at the church.

Approved the request to hold an Easter Sunrise Service on April 16 and

to serve breakfast to the congregation following the service.

Approved the request to hold an April 22/23 Mission Sleep Over at the church.

Approval was given to pay tuition costs for Carrie Leopold, Handbell Director to attend the handbell Camp at the International Peace Gardens from July 2 thru July 8.

A request from Brian Matzke and Nicole Wetzstein to have their daughter, Erika Rose Matzke baptized on February 26th was considered. The request was approved pending satisfactory reports from two elders who will meet with them regarding the responsibilities of baptism and approval from Pastor Stith to officiate at the baptism. Erika Rose was born on November 25, 2005 in Fargo, ND. She is the granddaughter of Marty and Deb Matzke and the great-granddaughter of Dale and Gail Matzke and Jim and Marlys Martin.

Approval was given for the Afternoon Circle to conduct a Penny Drive with proceeds going to the Rape and Abuse Crisis Center to help with their programs. The Center is hoping to raise \$10,000 in pennies from the Fargo, Moorhead and West Fargo communities. An offering jar will be in the narthex from January 29 thru February 28, 2006 to accept penny donations.

The date for the quilt raffle by the Quilters was changed from May 25th to May 21st to coincide with the potluck to be held on the last day of Sunday School.

Session members decided to order a book entitled The Presbyterian Handbook, What you Need to Know about Being Presbyterian. The Session members will pay for their own books.

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Lowell Wiese reported that all indications are that Sandra Keller is quickly learning her job as bookkeeper and office assistant. She will be in the office from 9:00 - 12:00 a.m. Monday through Friday. Opal Grunewald has been informed that her services will no longer be necessary and was thanked for doing the bulletin and newsletter for the past several years.

The Nominating Committee reported that they have candidates for all positions that are open for elders, Trustees and Nominating Committee to be considered for election at the Annual Meeting on January 29. The Stewardship Committee reported that a proposed church budget will be included in the annual report.

The Mission Committee reported that the Cuddle-Up Program at our church is now taking part in the Linus Project to provide handmade blankets to children who have been traumatized in some way through removal from abusive homes, those who have lost belongings in a fire or who are hospitalized with a serious illness. The Cuddle-Up Group presented the Linus Project with 40 handmade blankets on Wednesday, January 18th. Anyone wishing to make handmade blankets for this project should contact Carol Sterup for information. Lowell Wiese complimented the Mission Committee on the work they have done in 2005.

Pastor Stith's request for 2 1/2 days of vacation from February 16 through the 18th was approved. He was also given permission to take study leave from March 6 - March 13 at Princeton. The Worship Committee will need to arrange for pulpit supply for March 12th.

Pastor Stith reported that many of the

confirmands and their mentors will be attending the Presbytery Meeting on January 27 & 28 at First Presbyterian Church in Fargo. He also reported that approximately 24 persons have signed up to make the trip to Kenya this summer. Pastor Stith will be one of the co-leaders for this trip and Blair Moorhead is also planning to go.

The Clerk reported that 64 persons were served Communion on December 25, 2005 and 75 on January 1, 2006. The funeral for Marcella Bahls, daughter of Gary and Tammy Bahls and granddaughter of Delbert and Donna Jenner was held at the church on December 27th. Marcy passed away on December 22, 2005. Approximately 375 mourners attended the funeral and about 300 persons were served lunch following the funeral. The PW provided and served the lunch.

February 12th has been set as the date to install new officers elected at the annual meeting on January 29th if the new officers are able to be in church that day.

Delores Horn, Clerk of Session

**2006 HEAD USHER LIST**

January	Dwight Steffen
February	Dale Matzke
March	Bob Gross
April	Dave Ruhnke
May	Brent Montgomery
June	Larry Peihl
July	Jim Bjorklund
August	Chuck Thompson
September	Don Van Cleve
November	Derek Leopold
December	Will Petik

ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

The Annual Meeting was held on January 29, 2006 in the sanctuary immediately following the worship service.

The meeting was opened with prayer by Moderator D. Matthew Stith. It was determined that a quorum was present as needed to hold the meeting.

Andrew Thostenson expressed thanks for having the report to the congregation a week before the meeting.

The financial reports were presented by Co-Treasurer Cheryl Montgomery. Mention was made that the reports were clear and easier to read than before. The financial reports were approved by voice vote.

Greg Sterup presented the proposed church budget for 2006. This budget estimated expenses of \$167,830 and income of \$156,230. Income for 2005 was \$143,800. This leaves a balance of \$24,030 to be raised to balance this budget. The budget includes mortgage payments of \$11,600 on the building project.

The membership report was presented and a correction in the number of losses (-1) was made to make the total membership as of 12-31-2005 at 295 members. This report was approved as corrected.

All other reports were approved as printed. (There are extra copies of the annual report available in the church narthex.)

The 2006 terms of call were approved as printed - calling for a \$1,200 increase in the pastor's compensation.

The following members were elected as elders for terms of three years each: James Johnson, Boots Misheski and Steve Hanna. Trustees elected were: Derek Leopold and Bob Olson for terms

of 3 years each and Melissa Eiter for a one year term to complete the term of Tom DeJong, who has resigned due to health problems.

Lynn Hummel, Carol Sterup and Marlys Martin were elected to the Nominating Committee to serve with the elder who is chair of the Nominating Committee. Andrew Thostenson was elected to a three year term on the Endowment Committee.

Todd Montgomery stated that the reason the report was ready a week earlier was because the late date for the meeting allowed time for the treasurers and bookkeeper to get the financial reports ready.

Installation and ordination of the new elders and trustees will be held on February 12th during the worship service. The meeting was closed with prayer by Moderator Stith and adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

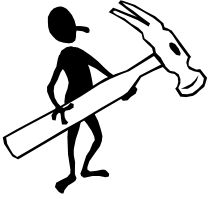
Delores Horn,
Clerk of Session



RAPE AND ABUSE CRISIS CENTER PENNY DRIVE

The Rape and Abuse Crisis Center has launched a drive to raise \$10,000 by collecting pennies. The money will be used to fund the center which helps people who are traumatized by rape and other kinds of abuse. The Afternoon Circle has received approval from the session to help in this effort and have place a collection jar in the narthex. The jar will be in the narthex from January 29 until February 28.

Please round up all the pennies lying around your house and donate them to this worthy cause. You might even have a contest with your children to see who can find the most pennies lying around.



JANUARY PROJECT OPEN DOOR REPORT

In some ways, January was a busy month, and in others, it was a month spent waiting for big decisions that will need to be made in February.

First, we sent our project out for bids to contractors the first week of January. Our architect reports that we had six requests from general contractors for bid papers, and her best guess is that we will have three or four bids to consider.

Second, select members of the design committee and those folks advising them on finishing schemes, completed their work, with decisions most notably on the color and texture of the bricks.

Third, the Session reviewed the Presbyterian Church USA Building and Loan (PCUSAB&L) fund's proposal for financing POD. The Session unanimously agreed to their proposals on the ninth, and, then, the PCUSAB&L folks formally approved our loan with a letter of commitment from them dated 19 January. Essentially, their terms call for a 20 year mortgage, a five year fixed interest rate at 5.7%, and they have committed to fund the project up to \$450,000. (Please note, we hope to not need all of those funds, but they are now committed to us should we need them.)

Looking ahead, bids will be opened February 2nd. The design committee will evaluate the bids on the sixth and then make a recommendation to the Session at either their regularly scheduled February meeting or at a special meeting later in the month.

Please pray for good results for POD and pray especially that our leadership be given a measure of God's wisdom in making historic decisions for Community Presbyterian Church.

SOUL TRAIN SCHEDULE

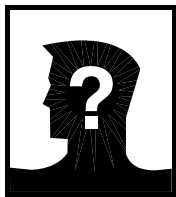


- Feb. 5 - Sr. High - meet at Stith's for the Super Bowl party - details TBA
- Middle School - meet at De Jong's for the Super Bowl party - details TBA
- Feb. 12 - Valentine's Dinner - served by Steele's & Soul Train - details TBA
- Feb. 17 - *Friday - skiing at Andes Tower - details TBA
- Feb. 26 - 6:30-8:30 - dinner and CAYA. I wonder what this could be?!?!?!?!?
- Mar. 5 - 6:30-8:30 - dinner and Talk About God
- Mar. 12 - 6:30-8:30 - dinner and PATH
- Mar. 19 - 6:30-8:30 - dinner and Fathers' Night Out
- Mar. 26 - 6:30-8:30 - dinner and plan Easter Sunrise Service and EEExtravaganza
- Mar. 30 - April 2 - Presbytery Retreat in Jamestown - details TBA
- Apr. 9 - 2:00-4:00 - EEExtravaganza - dinner following the EEE
- Apr. 16 - Easter Sunrise Service - details TBA
- Apr. 22/23 - *Saturday - Mission Day and Sleepover - details TBA
- Apr. 30 - 6:30-8:30 - dinner and golf competitions
- May 7 - 6:30-8:30 - dinner and golf competitions continued
- May 14 - 6:30-8:30 - Mother's Day Dinner
- May 21 - SS Carnival - final Soul Train outing

NEW SECRETARY/BOOKKEEPER



As of January 3rd, Sandra Keller is our new bookkeeper/office assistant. She will be in the office from 9:00 a.m. to noon Monday through Friday.



PER CAPITA, WHAT'S UP WITH THAT?

This is not another plea for folks to pay per capita. In this article and over the next couple

of newsletters, I will attempt to explain the origins of per capita, what it is, and why we as Presbyterians, should take this responsibility seriously.

The whole notion of an annual per capita payment is difficult to explain in brief. So when people hear per capita they just resign themselves to either coughing it up as just another offering or simply shrugging it off as just so much background noise.

I especially like to retell the story of how Elder Todd Montgomery used to strike terror in the hearts of young confirmands by asking them what per capita was during their session interview when they were being considered for membership. Todd was not being mean in asking this, he simply wanted to know if they understood that membership carried certain responsibilities. Usually, most confirmands stared at the floor, or mumbled some unintelligent statement about a membership fee. One confirmand blurted out \$23.98 (that year's amount). When asked what \$23.98 represented, another round of staring at the floor ensued. So clearly, we don't do a very good job explaining it.

Origins

Essentially, per capita's origins in America date back to the late 1800's when the governing body of the larger Presbyterian Church asked individual member churches to fund travel expenses for commissioners to the General Assemblies. The original idea was that all members should bear at least some minimal responsibility for paying for the

organization of the larger church. It evolved over the years into a per capita payment that helped pay for salary, mission, and other operating costs of the denomination.

Today

Per capita amounts are apportioned by the General Assembly or GA (the highest governing body of the church), the Synod, and the Presbytery. Interestingly, it is an expectation (but not a requirement) that each member on record pay per capita on an annual basis to the local church. The church is then expected (but not required) to pay per capita to the Presbytery. Next, the Presbytery *is required* to pay the GA and Synod apportionments regardless of church or member payment.

Is it a tax?

Obviously paying for any bureaucracy is not glamorous, exciting, or even popular. After all, the origin of our country was principally an argument over paying taxes to England. But per capita is not a tax, nor is it a membership fee. Rather, it is a gift made to the higher governing bodies of the denomination so the work of the church can be conducted. It pays missionary costs, travel costs, publishing cost and a million other items large and small to keep the doors of the denomination open and moving forward.

A benefit for Community Presbyterian Church

One program that the GA operates that directly impacts Community Presbyterian Church is their Building and Loan Fund. Thanks to this program, we are eligible for a loan for Project Open Door that is about 2.50% below commercial market rates. This discount is huge. The lower interest rate alone will easily

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cover our per capita apportionment payments to the GA. On another level, without the GA we would not have been able to conduct a nationwide search for a new minister. Their matching service was very important to the Pastor Nominating Committee. Without it we would have had to pony up thousands of dollars in recruitment costs to just identify candidates, much less hire one.

I don't support many of the positions of the denomination, so.....

.....I don't pay per capita. Yep, I am sympathetic to this argument. In fact, if you read Pastor Matt's article in this newsletter, you quickly find that there are plenty of reasons to be apprehensive. But we live in the real world. We can never expect everything they do to be in harmony with the local church. However, as a member of the PCUSA, we are accorded means through our representatives to address grievances. After all, the whole notion of being Presbyterian is based on higher governing bodies ruling only through the consent of the membership. We are a bottom up organization (unlike the Roman Catholic Church where authority comes from the Pope—top down). So, if we have a beef, we can work towards change through our representatives. In the meanwhile, we have a moral obligation to pay our per capita which is an.....

....."opportunity for all communicant members of the Presbyterian church through the governing bodies to participate equally, responsibly, and interdependently by sharing the cost of coordination and evaluation of mission; and of performing ecclesiastical, legislative, and judicial functions that identify a Reformed Church, while

at the same time strengthening the sense of community among all Presbyterians (GA Minutes, Part I, 1995).

Stay tuned for next month's exciting answers to **PER CAPITA, WHAT'S UP WITH THAT? PART II**. We will explore what our per capita dollars are used for at the Presbytery level and what benefits we get from it.

Andrew Thostenson



**FEBRUARY
DATES
TO REMEMBER**

BIRTHDAYS

- 2-3 Lowell Wiese
- 2-5 Cody Matzke
- 2-6 David Misheski
- 2-7 Tom Birrenkott
Dolores Kinslow
- 2-8 Riley Clennon
Ann Corneliussen
Jack Smith
- 2-9 Dean Hall
Blair Moorhead
- 2-11 Tammy Nelson
- 2-12 Gwen Keller
- 2-14 Randy Meyer
- 2-16 Stephanie Barenthsen
- 2-17 Kevin Galt
- 2-18 James Binger
- 2-19 Esther Hemm
- 2-19 Alex Talley
- 2-20 Clarence Bastle
- 2-21 Scott Meyer
- 2-24 Lia Dobrinz
- 2-25 Tom DeJong
Lisa Osborne
- 2-26 Patrick Steele

ANNIVERSARIES

- 2-6-32 Tom and Julia Pederson
- 2-19-81 Dixon and Mary Jo Moorhead
- 2-24-79 Scott and Vickie Meyer