

# PRESBEE



VOLUME 8, ISSUE 1

Jan/Feb/Mar 2010

## PRESBYTERY OF CENTRAL NEBRASKA

### THE YEAR IN REVIEW

2009 has been a full and eventful year. The sale of Westminster Woods was finally completed. The youth committee created in response to the decision to close and sell the camp has had a second year to do programming. We provided scholarships for nearly 30 campers, sent over twenty young people to a retreat in Estes Park (for a second year), and plans for the Triennium in 2010 say we might have more young people attend than ever before.

The committee on preparation for ministry welcomed Lisa Ewald and Alex Peterson as Inquirers which gives the presbytery four. They made Rebecca Dimon and Elizabeth Moses Candidates for Ministry, and certified Candidate Kendra Grams as ready to seek a call. There are two lay pastor trainees that are now about half way through their training program.

The business-budget committee

created two new funds to help with ministry in the presbytery. These funds are made possible because the reserve funds loaned to Westminster Woods have been repaid. The Mission Development Fund helps local churches start or conduct new mission projects and support mission work trips. The Racial Ethnic Ministry fund is seen primarily as supporting the Sudanese Commission although other requests for those funds will be considered.

The Cozad church called Elaine Besthorn to be their new pastor. This has been accompanied by the presbytery ordaining Elaine at the North Platte church. Kene-saw called and the presbytery commissioned Beth Fotinos to be the co-lay pastor with Tom Gould. The Aurora church has called lay pastor Suzanne Harland to part time service. Ewing UMPCUSA welcomed Eric Ford as their new pastor in the summer.

Stephen Price-Gibson was elected at the October presbytery meeting to serve as parliamentarian for the term 2010-2012. The presbytery welcomed new members Don Canady and Gui-Jie Zhang. The Sudanese Administrative Commission to work with the worshiping fellowship at Grand Island was elected. They have already ordained elders, approved a lay pastor, and provided training for these new leaders. The presbytery also contributed over \$5,000 to Christian Solidarity International which provides sacks of hope to Sudanese Refugees.

The presbytery continues to work toward achieving its goals in faithful submission to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

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### Presbytery Meeting

February 27, 2010

First Presbyterian Church, Grand Island

Registration - 8:30 a.m.

## A Reminder from the Presbytery Office

It's that time of year again! By now, however, we should all be very used to the routine. Yes, it's the annual statistical report.

The instructions books have been mailed. Every church should have received a book. But what you really need is on the cover of the book at the top; the user name and password. Once the statistical report is done and the Session has approved it, simply enter that information on the PC (USA) website and enter your statistics.

Things to remember:

- The session, not the congrega-

tion, approves the report.

- ANYONE can enter the data, anyone comfortable with computers.



- For churches that are federated or united or some other kind of relationship with another denomination: **only Presbyterian members are**

**counted. Do not enter a number for the combined churches.**

- The deadline is Tuesday, February 23, 2010.
- If you lose the information for logging on, email Angie Palmer, at [office@centralnepresby.org](mailto:office@centralnepresby.org) and I will send you the login information.
- Do not hesitate to call the 800 number in the book to get help!
- Let's work hard on getting a complete list of churches this year!

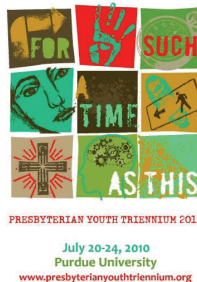
Thanks for your help and Merry Christmas!

APA  
**One-Day Seminar**

The Presbytery will be hosting another APA One-Day seminar. Please watch our website for more information.

## 2010 PYT Update

Our estimates for the 2010 Youth Triennium as a presbytery are: 65 youth (from 16 different churches), 5 ambassadors, 4-6 adult chaperones, and two to participate on the work crew. This is nearly three times the numbers we have had in the past.



notified us that they will be sending youth to the event will be receiving a letter with more details about registration.

If you have any questions please contact me at the presbytery office.

Angie Palmer  
PYT Registrar

This year registration is all done online. Soon each church that

## 2010 IRS Mileage Rate

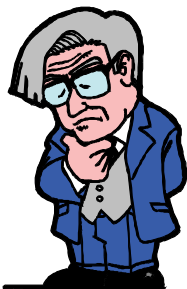
The IRS has announced the 2010 standard mileage rate, starting January 1, 2010. The rate will be 50¢ as compared to 55¢ in 2009.

## 2010 Per Capita

Presbytery	\$15.70
Synod	\$ 4.80
GA	<u>\$ 6.15</u>
Total	\$26.65

## 2010 Unified Mission Pledges

Presbytery	73%
Synod	9%
GA	18%



## Bob's Thoughts

With Advent we have already started the

New Year on the church calendar. It won't be long before we celebrate the new year of 2010. There seems to be a freshness that comes with that celebration. For some it means resolutions to do new things or at least do things differently. It is like we can forget our failures and uncompleted projects and plans for the past year and try to do better next time.

I am struck by the fact that the Bible ends with a creation story just as it begins. I believe that reminds us that the God we worship and serve is a God that is always calling us into newness. God is especially willing to forgive and forget those failures of the past and can even overlook those uncompleted projects, plans and promises.

However, it isn't always easy for us to be pulled into newness. That seems to be what much of the struggle in the church revolves around today. Are we willing to do new things or some of the old things in new ways? For me, change always carries with it two distinct feelings. The first is a sense of fear because the new is unknown. The other

is a sense of excitement because of the infinite possibilities that come with the new.

As we approach 2010 in the Presbytery of Central Nebraska, I am excited about some of the things the Youth Committee has in the works. We could send the largest number of young people to Youth Triennium ever. And not to steal their thunder they are talking about instituting a Rural Ministry Youth Institute or a summer youth intern program if they can work out all of the details.

The work of the Sudanese Administrative Commission has many exciting possibilities. It also carries with it the fear that we will discover there is more for us to do than we have the resources to accomplish. I keep reflecting on what Heidi McGinnis shared with us at the October meeting about the ministry with the Sudanese that has gone on so long. We are just now getting our first hand experience with it.

Another possibility on the horizon for 2010 is the God's Mission Needs a Church initiative. An in-

troductory workshop was held in October and now plans to follow up on that will begin in January. There is no way to predict where this effort might lead us but I am most hopeful that this will become a real resource for our local congregations as they seek to serve God in their communities.

The council is presenting for second reading goals and objectives for 2010-2012. These too will pull us into a new tomorrow. Some focus on getting churches more involved in evangelism and mission. Others are listed above.

All of this happens in the context of a country still struggling with economic downturns. All of this happens in the context of being faithful to the God who calls us into tomorrow saying trust me.

**"...it isn't always easy for us to be pulled into newness."**

## Who is coming and who is going?

Congratulations to Elaine Besthorn who was recently ordained on November 15th. The Rev. Elaine Besthorn has accepted her first call at the First Presbyterian Church in Cozad.



**Schedule of Events**

- Jan 1—Office Closed to observe New Year's Day
- Jan 7—B&B meeting at the PCN office in Kearney 10 a.m.
- Jan 9—Deacon Training at the FPC in Broken Bow 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- Jan 9 Elder Level I training at the FPC in Broken Bow 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.
- Jan 19—Council meeting at the PCN office in Kearney 10 a.m.
- Jan 25—28—GP gone to attend the COM/CPM Training Event in MN
- Jan 26—Docket Deadline

*January 2010*

<i>SU</i>	<i>MO</i>	<i>TU</i>	<i>WE</i>	<i>TH</i>	<i>FR</i>	<i>SA</i>
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

**Schedule of Events**

- Feb 1—4—Winter Pastors School at Hastings College starts at 3 p.m.
- Feb 15—Office Closed to Observe Presidents' Day
- Feb 17—Ash Wednesday
- Feb 21 –23—GP gone to attend Synod Minutes Review in MN
- Feb 23—Statistical Report Deadline for churches.
- Feb 26—"Why bother with the Church?" workshop
- Feb 27—Presbytery meeting at the FPC in Grand Island, registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

*February 2010*

<i>SU</i>	<i>MO</i>	<i>TU</i>	<i>WE</i>	<i>TH</i>	<i>FR</i>	<i>SA</i>
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# March 2010

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28	29	30	31			

## Schedule of Events

- Mar 22—24—GP gone to attend EP Forum in MN



## Privacy Rules and Prayer Requests

Since the privacy rules of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) went into effect, some churches have been confused over HIPAA's applicability and have abandoned the long-time practice of publicizing prayer requests regarding their members.

Churches should be aware most prayer requests\* are not covered by HIPAA's privacy rules; however, one impact of HIPAA has been to raise awareness of privacy concerns. Thus, it's not HIPAA but "invasion of privacy" laws already existing in most states that can be the basis of a lawsuit by persons who feel their private information has been publicly shared without their consent.

While HIPAA does not generally keep churches from sharing

medical concerns of their members, churches should still use caution and sensitivity in doing so. The best practice is to obtain consent (preferably written) from the affected individual or, if that is not possible, from the individual's family. A less effective safeguard is to adopt an "opt-out" policy by which the church will publicize prayer requests unless the individual notifies the church they do not want their information shared. When the information is shared, it's best to provide as little specific detail about the condition as needed, even listing a family member's contact information (with their consent) so that she or he can decide whether to provide additional detail. Also, recognize information published in a church bulletin or at the church itself will be limited to church attendees, while e-mailed or posted information on the church's

Website can be accessed by anyone.

By providing the information only with consent and by limiting the amount of detail and distribution of the information, the church is better positioned to protect itself while still meeting the need for prayer for the individual.

Article provided by "The Leader" a publication for GuideOne Insurance Church Policyholders

*\*Churches with employees on church-sponsored health plans and churches that provide medical care, such as through a health clinic, should talk to their counsel about HIPAA's applicability to their situation.*



## Message Board

### Deacon Training

January 9, 2010  
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.  
First Presbyterian Church in Broken Bow

This event is designed for all who are deacons or those who might become deacons in a church in this presbytery. Please encourage all deacon members, deacons elect, and ministers or lay pastors. Church members might find it helpful to learn what they can expect of their deacons.

Leadership will be provided by Cynthia Harvey, Kathy Morrow, and Bob Houser

Please register with the presbytery office by January 5th so that we can have an adequate number of handouts for the participants.

**COST WILL BE YOUR TRAVEL ,TIME, & LUNCH**

### Elder Level I Training

January 9, 2010  
2:00 to 4:00 p.m.  
First Presbyterian Church in Broken Bow

This event is designed for all who are elders or those who might become elders in a church in this presbytery. Please encourage all session members, elders elect, and session moderators to attend. Church members might find it helpful to learn what they can expect of their session.

Leadership will be provided by Bob Houser

Please register with the presbytery office by January 5th so that we can have an adequate number of handouts for the participants.

**COST WILL BE YOUR TRAVEL AND TIME**

### Reminder

Make sure that your pastor completes a salary change form for the Board of Pensions if there is going to be a change in their salary. You can get these change forms by going to [www.pensions.org](http://www.pensions.org).

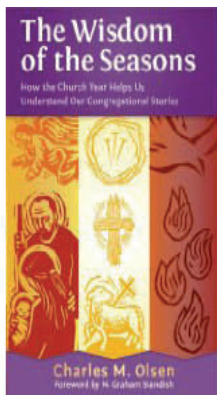
### Tax Tips

Be sure to handle correctly any Christmas gifts made by the church or congregation to a minister or lay staff member. In most cases these transfers represent taxable income and not a tax-free gift, and must be reported as income on the recipient's W-2 form.

A gift of property having a value so small "as to make accounting for it unreasonable or administratively impracticable" is a nontaxable "de minimis fringe benefit." This exception does not apply to cash or "cash equivalents" (i.e., gift certificates).

Gifts made to volunteers are subject to these same rules, except that a church is not required to report these gifts as taxable income to volunteers unless they receive compensation from the church of \$600 or more during the year (in which case the church issues them a Form 1099)

Also, December is a good time to check with all nonminister church employees to see if they need to file a new W-4 form with the church. The W-4 form is used by employees to report withholding allowances. This information will determine how much income tax the church withholds from the wages of a nonminister employee. W-4 forms often become obsolete because of changes in an employee's circumstances, but the employee fails to submit a new form to the church. This can result in withholding that is significantly above or below the actual tax liability.



The 2010 Winter Pastors' School  
**When Church Stories Become Songs**  
 With the Rev. Chuck Olsen  
**February 1 - 4, 2010**  
 Hastings College, Hastings, Nebraska

*When Church Stories Become Songs* will take participants into the stories of their congregations, mining them for wisdom in relation to the seasons of the church year. What are the stories? When are the seasons of the stories? What connections do these have with the seasons of the year? How can God's presence be named, celebrated in the stories, and, become songs? Finally, how can the stories be reframed so that we do not get stuck in the stories of the past but move forward into a new and hopeful future?

Practical applications of this year's Pastors' School include preaching from the lectionary in the seasons, personal reflection on faith stories, spiritual development of church boards and leadership teams, communal story formation, and congregational understanding and developing of their own stories.

The Pastors' School will begin with the **first presentation at 3:00 pm on Monday, February 1**, and will end with a communion worship service at 3:00 on Thursday, February 4. All classes and meals will be in the Hazelrigg Student Union on the Hasting College campus. Participants will be housed at a Hasting motel in a private room. Please indicate your preference for a smoking or non-smoking room, and indicate whether you plan to check out on Thursday, or stay overnight and check out on Friday. *If you do plan to stay Thursday night, it will be at your expense. You will be able to get the conference rate for your evening's stay.*

Dr. Charles M. (Chuck) Olsen, a native Nebraskan, is a retired minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA). His most recent book, ***The Wisdom of the Seasons: How the Church Year Helps us Understand Our Congregational Stories***, was released by Alban in October, 2009. Chuck has twenty-two years of pastoral experience and served on national staff of the PCUS in Atlanta, as program director with the Heartland Presbyterian Center in Kansas City, and was founder of Worshipful-Work: Center for Transforming Religious Leadership, an inclusive ecumenical ministry focusing on the integration of spirituality and administration in church leadership.

The Winter Pastors' School is sponsored by the presbyteries of Central Nebraska, Homestead, and Missouri River Valley, with Hastings College and the Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation as supportive partners. The cost of this year's Winters Pastors' School for participants from the three sponsoring presbyteries is \$150 which covers all meals, lodging, and events. An additional \$75 fee will cover the cost of meals, lodging, and events for spouses. **(The cost for participants from other presbyteries is \$250, or \$325 with spouse.)** The Foundation has a limited number of scholarships (up to \$100) available for this event. Please contact Gary Eller at the Foundation.

**Please send registration (attached) and fees by January 4, 2010.**

Please make checks payable to the "Inter-presbytery Committee," and mail to:

2010 Winter Pastors' School  
 c/o Becky Balestri, 851 N. 74<sup>th</sup> St., Omaha, NE 68114

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse (If attending): \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Presbytery \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Fax (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Non-smoking \_\_\_ or smoking \_\_\_ motel room. Thursday morning \_\_\_\_\_ or Friday morning \_\_\_ checkout.

Special Needs:

**PRESBYTERY OF CENTRAL  
NEBRASKA**

4111 4th Avenue  
Suite 28  
Kearney , Ne 68845

Phone: 308-236-6996

E-mail:

office@centralnepresby.org

**Check out our new website!  
[www.centralnepresby.org](http://www.centralnepresby.org)**

***PRESBYTERY OF CENTRAL NEBRASKA MISSION***

*By the grace of God, The Presbytery of Central Nebraska, a governing body of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), is a community of faith called to nurture, serve and support our congregations in the proclamation of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, and is committed to ministry and mission within and beyond our geographic and denominational bounds. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the Presbytery seeks to lead congregations with energy, intelligence, imagination and love.*