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SYNOD OF MID-AMERICA
Reformed Church in America
NEWSLETTER - - - Volume 14, Number 22 - - - December 9, 2013
<http://www.midamericasynod.org>
<http://msyn.org>

"Healthy classes and congregations through revitalization and multiplication"

Synod Telephone Number Change

While with the synod staff transition the main synod office telephone number (815-464-9181) will remain the same as it is now, as of today you will reach Chad Schuitema's office rather than the office of Randy Kooy. To reach Randy Kooy directly call one of the numbers listed in his section of this newsletter. You can continue to reach Wayne Van Regenmorter directly by calling the numbers listed in Wayne's section of this newsletter.

Invitation to Celebration

The Synod of Mid-America would like to invite you to attend a celebration at Camp Manitouqua of Randy Kooy's years of excellence in serving the synod on Friday, December 13, 2013 at 6:00 PM (Central Time). Dinner will be provided - location will be the Dining Hall building. Please RSVP to chad@msyn.org to let us know how many will be attending. We hope you will come and celebrate Randy's retirement!

2014 IRS Standard Mileage Rate

The business mileage reimbursement rate for 2014 has been lowered to **56 cents per mile**. This is a one-half cent decrease over the current rate. It is the standard mileage rate that the Minister Salary Guidelines (as approved by each classis) requires a church to use to reimburse a pastor use of his or her personal vehicle for church business. More information can be found at <http://www.irs.gov/2014-Standard-Mileage-Rates-for-Business,-Medical-and-Moving-Announced>. The 2014 Ministers Salary Schedule and Rules can be found at <http://msyn.org/pdf1/2014SalarySchRules.pdf>.

Minister Family News

On December 4, 2013, Gladys Cordes, wife of Ralph Cordes (deceased), passed away. Gladys was 91 years old. Ralph was an RCA pastor and member of the Illinois Classis. Synod of Mid-America churches that he served were Community Reformed, Freeport, Illinois and Second Reformed, Pekin, Illinois. Services were held for Gladys at Second Reformed-Pekin and also in Titonka, Iowa.

Synod of Mid-America Youth Invited to Genesis: 2014

Genesis is an event for Senior High students, where leaders and students can worship honestly and grow spiritually. Students are given an opportunity to lead and serve in various ways, grow together as a group, and connect with the other youth that have all converged on The Grand Traverse Resort, Traverse City, Michigan. This event is sponsored by the Regional Synod of the Great Lakes. The 2014 event will be held February 28 thru March 2, 2014 with the cost being \$175. **This year the Synod of**

the Great Lakes invites the youth of the Synod of Mid-America to Genesis! For more information see here: <http://genesisevent.org/>

Celebration Stories

You are invited to share a story of celebration what is happening in your church or ministry to be posted in this section. All are encouraged to make submissions so that we can celebrate as a region. There is no story in this issue but you are invited to share yours.

We share stories with one another so that God's name is praised, first of all. These stories, though, have the added value of encouraging those who do God's work. Please send your stories of God's activity in the revitalization of people or of a ministry and/or stories of the multiplication of ministries to Chad Schuitema at chad@msyn.org.

From Wayne Van Regenmorter, Synod Visionary Leader (wregen@msyn.org):

A Tribute to Randy Kooy...

At the end of December 2013, Randy Kooy will retire from his position as Synod Coordinator/Administrator for the Synod of Mid-America. In addition to this position, Randy was responsible as the Stated Clerk-Treasurer for the synod. He served the synod faithfully for the past 15 years. Randy's work involved the day-to-day operations of the synod, including communications, budget and financial reports, the newsletter and websites, the detail work of synod operations and routine activities, a general resource to classis and congregations, serving on the Camp Manitoqua Board, working with Specialized Transition Ministers, coordinating the Commissioned Pastor process in the region, serving a number of years as a member and moderator of the RCA Commission on Church Order, and numerous other ministry responsibilities. My working relationship and personal friendship with Randy dates back to 2003 when I was working as the Florida Classis Minister and since 2007 we have been working together in the region as a team. I want to express a public word of thanks for Randy as a loyal and faithful friend, a person gifted with tremendous administrative and organization skills, a detail person who sees little things often unnoticed by others, a hard worker who is not afraid of new challenges, an encyclopedia on the BCO, a great co-worker through transition and change, a person of incredible integrity, a lifelong learner on new ideas and technology, and for his sterling attitude of humility.

Randy helped create and mold the structure of the Synod of Mid-America as it is today with its mission to encourage and equip classes so they may faithfully follow Christ in ministry and mission. He enthusiastically promoted the synod's vision to see classes and congregations made healthy through revitalization and multiplication. He was involved to a large extent in the restructure of several of the classes in the region and the merger of the Illiana-Florida Classis beginning in 2011. Randy was the synod's communication link to Camp Manitoqua as he served on the Manitoqua Ministries Board and promoted the work of God's kingdom for children, young people and adults in a camp setting. Randy is probably best known throughout the region and elsewhere in the RCA as the "guru on the BCO". If you have a question regarding the BCO, call Randy! If you want to change the by laws for the classis, call

have a question regarding the BCO...call Randy! If you want to change the by-laws for the classis...call Randy! If you have a question concerning the transfer of a pastor into the RCA...call Randy! So you want to change how to elect Elders and Deacons...call Randy! If you have a question on church organization, church closure, church discipline...call Randy! If you have a legal question regarding orderly BCO procedure...call Randy! He has been absolutely vital to me as a resource person in working through situations and issues involving the BCO.

It's been a pleasure and honor to work with Randy. I have been very blessed by our working relationship and friendship. I have always enjoyed listening to his stories about camping experiences, his wife Diana and family, or new adventures exploring new places or restaurants. I have appreciated the times that Randy listened to the sharing of my joys and concerns, my fears and anxieties, my victories and celebrations. I am grateful for the times we have turned all things over to God and prayed together. It has truly been a privilege to have Randy as a friend and colleague.

It will be hard to see you retire, Randy, but enjoy what God has planned for you ahead. May you have the time to enjoy the hobbies, other people and things that deeply enrich your life. May God continue to use you to impact the lives of others around you and may He bless you with good health and the riches of His peace. We all know you speak with authority at classis meetings, but you are really a softie at heart. Thank you for your encouragement through difficult times. Thank you for your Christ-like witness. Thank you for your many years of service and contributions to the region and the RCA. "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

Wayne Van Regenmorter

Schedule

December 9: Meeting/Grace Reformed Church/Lansing, IL
Meeting/Glenwood, IL
10: Meeting/Faith Church/Dyer, IN
Meeting/Beecher, IL
11: Chicago Classis Coordinating Committee/Calvary Reformed Church/Orland Park, IL
12: Coaching/Office
13: Randy Kooy's Retirement Appreciation/Camp Manitouqua/Frankfort, IL
14: Off
15: Sunday Worship
16: Office
17: Meeting/Illiana-Florida Executive Team-Florida Corporation/Faith Church/Dyer, IN
Meeting/Faith Church/Dyer, IN
Florida Governance Team Conference Call
18: Synod Personnel Conference Call
19 - January 1, 2014: Vacation

Wayne's contact information:

10088 Prairie Knoll Ct.
St. John, IN 46373
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Home phone: 219-365-1694
Email: wregen@msyn.org

From Chad Scuitema, Administrative and Ministry Leader (chad@msyn.org):

Schedule

December 9: Lafayette Office

10: Manitoqua Office/Meeting in Dyer

11: Lafayette Office

12: Lafayette Office

13: Manitoqua Office

16: Lafayette Office

17: Meetings in Dyer

18: Lafayette Office

19: Lafayette Office

20: Lafayette Office

Chads contact information:

8122 West Sauk Trail

Frankfort, IL 60423

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Lafayette office phone: 219-669-1140

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From Randy Kooy, Coordinator-Administrator-Stated Clerk-Treasurer (rkooy@msyn.org):

What follows below are a few links to on-line articles that one may find interesting or helpful.

Clergy Housing Allowance - Wisconsin Judge Ruling - from Church Law Group

<http://churchlawgroup.com/blog/tax-exempt/a-clg-brief-analysis-on-the-federal-courts-recent-ruling-that-clergy-housing-allowance-is-unconstitutional/>

On Friday, November 22, 2013, U.S. District Court Judge Barbara B. Crabb of the Western District of Wisconsin ruled Section 107(2) of the Internal Revenue Code (clergy tax-free housing allowance) unconstitutional. Many ministers take advantage of the tax-free housing allowance and the Church Law Group wants to let you know what this development might mean for you and what you can do in the meantime to make your voice heard.

Many congregations are stuck in an overly churchd culture - from George Bullards Journey

<http://bullardjournal.blogs.com/bullardjournal/2013/12/many-congregations-are-stuck-in-an-overly-churched-culture.html>

In the midst of a region of the world where the impact of a churchd culture is fading, many congregations in North America are stuck in an overly churchd culture perspective. As a result these congregations become insulated, isolated and inoculated from people who are pre-Christians, unchurched, underchurchd and dechurchd. These congregations did not mean for this to happen. It was not intentional. It just crept up on them over a number of years even decades.

Back to the Future - from Peter Steinke at Alban Institute

<http://www.alban.org/congregation.asp?id=10270>

<http://www.aidan.org/conversation.aspx?id=10370>

At a workshop [the author] was leading, a woman stood up and said, "If 1950 were to return, my congregation would be ready." Succinctly, she summarized a nagging problem for many churches. The context in which congregations now find themselves is quite different from 1950. "How we do church," though, has been quite persistent: Become a member of the local congregation, contribute money and effort, participate in communal events, volunteer time and goods, and worship regularly or at least several times a year. This pattern of "church" continued for decades in North America, but then things changed quickly.

Making audio work for everyone - from Church Executive

<http://churchexecutive.com/archives/making-audio-work-for-everyone>

It's entirely possible for the sound system operator to have a servant's heart and be involved in the sound system ministry for all the right reasons. But if he or she doesn't possess the skill set to operate the system at the level the pastor expects, there can be tension. A pastor should clearly define the audio expectations. Is Sunday morning expected to be 100 percent perfect, with zero tolerance for technical glitches? The answer might depend on the size of the church, the style of ministry and the complexity of the worship program.

6 ways you can promote your Christmas series or event - from Center for Church Communication

<http://www.churchmarketingsucks.com/2013/11/6-ways-you-can-promote-your-christmas-series-or-event/>

One of the great things about Christmas is that people who don't normally go to church are inclined to go during Christmas if they are asked or given the opportunity to go. So we need to leverage this and to promote our Christmas series and events so those who are hurting and broken have the opportunity to receive the love of our Savior. So let's talk about six ways you can get the word out to these people.

How to handle anonymous gifts for employees - from Managing Your Church

http://blog.managingyourchurch.com/2013/11/qa_anonymous_gifts_for_employe.html

How does a church handle an anonymous money gift given to a pastor or staff member? All love gifts are taxable to the employee, even if it meets the requirements to be a benevolent gift. However, this is not the end of the analysis. The church has a responsibility to assure that an employee does not receive more than a reasonable amount of compensation through a nonbenevolent love gift.

4 things to consider before starting a food pantry - from Managing Your Church

http://blog.managingyourchurch.com/2013/12/four_things_to_consider_before.html

Most people have at least a basic understanding of the reality that people are going hungry throughout the world, and even in the heart of a wealthy nation like the United States. For a church that feels compelled or called to do its part to eradicate hunger, establishing a food pantry might be an effective way to make a difference. Before launching a food pantry ministry, here are some things to consider.

Developing a thank you system for your church - from Lewis Center for Church Leadership

http://www.churchleadership.com/leadingideas/leaddocs/2013/131120_article2.html

Saying thank you promptly and regularly is one of the simplest and most effective things a congregation can do to reinforce good stewardship and enhance giving. When people are thanked regularly, they feel appreciated, valued and needed which makes them more likely to support ministry with their time, talents and financial support. To accomplish this, churches need a thank you system that is personal, prompt and planned.

Schedule

December 9: DeMotte office

10: Manitoqua office AM; mtg at Faith-Dyer PM

11: DeMotte office

12: DeMotte office

13: DeMotte office; Manitoqua dinner PM

16: DeMotte office

17: Illiana-Florida Exec Team/MLT mtg AM; Resourcing mtg PM

18: Vacation day

19: Manitoqua office

12: DeMotte office

Randy's contact information:

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This email newsletter is sent to churches, ministers, and friends of the Synod of Mid-America. To [unsubscribe](#) to this newsletter click [here](#) and send email. Previous issues of the newsletter can be found at http://www.msyn.org/index_files/news.htm

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