
SYNOD OF MID-AMERICA
Reformed Church in America
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<http://www.midamericasynod.org>
<http://msyn.org>

“Healthy classes and congregations through revitalization and multiplication”

Creating and Weathering the Storm: Hope for Church Leadership

All church leadership is invited to attend **Creating and Weathering the Storm: Hope for Church Leadership**. This equipping event sponsored by the Synod of Mid-America and the Classis of Chicago is open to the entire region. Leadership teams will learn what it means to create a storm – why that is good – and to weather it. Through it all there is hope for leadership! This title seemed appropriate to the planning team as the members talked about the content being planned for leadership groups from congregations within our regional synod.



Jim Herrington and Trisha Taylor will be leading church leadership groups around the topics of:

*Creating continuing change, keeping your cool
Calm and cool when it all goes crazy*

The sessions will be designed for congregation leadership groups to be better leaders within their congregations. Leaders will be able to take away information and resources to continue the process after the sessions. This can lead to new vision and vitality within churches – and hope for the church leadership!

Jim and Trisha are known to several within our regional synod as they are working extensively and intentionally with five churches in a momentum mobilization revitalization process within those congregations. They will share a healthy taste of this work with all those that participate in the Friday evening and Saturday morning event. One pastor who is involved in this revitalization process said **“We need to start living as Jesus calls his followers to live. [This] process is helping us do that in new ways that call us to deeper levels of authenticity and integrity – and that lead to healing and new life through Jesus Christ.”** The event will be most valuable if several leaders from each church can attend – and great if most of the church’s leadership is there. *Creating and Weathering the Storm* is designed for pastors, elders, deacons, staff, and all other key leaders in our congregations.

Here are some of the specifics:

- Invitation is for all church leadership of congregations within the Synod of Mid-America
- Dates: Friday evening, April 30, 2010 and Saturday morning, May 1, 2010
- Location: Christ Community Church, 13400 Bell Road, Lemont, IL 60439
- Cost: \$10 per person if registered by April 1 - \$15 per person after April 1
- **Registration will begin in March**



Begin now to talk about this within your church’s leadership. Reserve the dates. Ask your leadership to reserve the dates. Plan to make this a significant part of your leadership training this year. This event is co-sponsored by the Classis of Chicago and the Synod of Mid-America and is open to all. The synod’s annual business session for delegates to the synod will be held on the Friday afternoon of the event. Watch for additional details and registration information.

Youth Ministry Information – please forward information to appropriate persons:

Time Out: Youth Worker Retreat

Camp Manitoqua is hosting a youth worker retreat that will be a time to “**Re-fo-cus, re-con-nect, re-en-er-gize – for the spring push of ministry**”. During your *TIME OUT!* you will have the chance to take time for yourself and create space for the Lord to speak to you. This is a 24 hour time period where you can be still, pray, read and reconnect with God. During lunch Camp Manitoqua & Retreat Center staff will be available to talk about their hope to be your year round ministry partner. Manitoqua desires to be an asset to your ministry by providing quality programs and facilities. Join them to come together to share a TIME OUT! The dates are February 23-24. More information including a place to register can be found at <http://www.manitoqua.org/Brix?pageID=20652> or call 815-469-2319. **Deadline to register is February 15, 2010.** Please forward this information to your youth workers!



RCA 2010 Youth Ministry Conference

The RCA, Western Seminary Journey, and others are sponsoring a conference on Relational Youth Ministry on April 29-30 at Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan. The two-day conference features various workshops for youth workers. The featured speaker will be Andy Root who has authored books on relational youth ministry. Much more information can be found at <http://www.westernsem.edu/explore/programs/journey/calendar/youth2010#Schedule> including a place to register.

Project Timothy 2010: Impact – Mission Trips for Youth

God moves in powerful ways on mission trips. When God wanted to transform someone in the Bible, He moved them out of their comfort zone and took them on a trip. Experiences like Project Timothy don't compete with a youth ministry program – they complete it. Maybe your church is not going to do a youth mission trip this year but you have one or two youth who are interested in participating in this type of experience. The Project Timothy trips can be a fit for these situations. To find out much more information, follow this link: <http://www.rca.org/projecttimothy>

Pastor News

Sympathy is extended to the Rev. Ken Zuithoff and his family upon the death of Ken's mother. Helen Zuithoff passed away on January 29, 2010 at the age of 101. With help from her daughter, Marcia, and good neighbors, Helen was able to remain in her home ever since the death of her beloved husband, Wilfred, in 1981. Ken is the pastor at Bethel Reformed Church in Sterling, Illinois.

RCA to Hold Pastors Network Facilitators Training

The RCA will be holding a training session for persons who are interested in leading an RCA Pastor Network. It will be held May 4-6, 2010 at a lodge in northern Michigan. This training is for persons who have already been trained to be an RCA Coach. For more information including expectations contact Randy Kooy (rkooy@rca.org) or Wayne Van Regenmorter (wvanregenmorter@rca.org).

Women and Youth Delegates to General Synod Suggestions Needed

Each year the regional synods of the RCA can send one youth corresponding delegate and two women corresponding delegates to General Synod. A corresponding delegate participates like a regular delegate with the exception of vote. Additionally the “youth” delegate (somewhere around traditional college age) will meet with the other “youth” delegates to experience the synod together; and it is anticipated that the youth delegates have given some thought about the possibility that God may be calling him or her to be a pastor. That does not necessarily mean that a decision has been made rather it is the intention of the participation in General Synod as a youth delegate to help that person discern hearing the Holy Spirit's voice. Do you know someone who might be a candidate to be a youth delegate? Do you have suggestions for women who might be interested in learning more about the RCA and participating in General Synod? General Synod will meet on the campus of Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa on June 10-15. Please get your suggestions along with contact information to Randy Kooy (rkooy@rca.org).

Prayer Section – please forward this information to those in your church whose gift is praying.

February Issue – Intercessors Unite – Focused Prayer within the Synod of Mid-America

The February issue of the Synod of Mid-America prayer focus tool, Intercessors Unite, is available on line. It is a tool to help us as a synod focus our prayers on our common concerns. **This issue requests prayer for Chicago Classis and its congregations; and lists prayer requests received from classes and congregations.** You are asked to click on [Intercessors Unite](#) and pray the prayer agenda listed for the month of February. To find **our regional synod's prayer tool** follow this link: <http://intunite.msyn.org/IU201002.htm>; there are also links from the synod's home page and resources page (<http://msyn.org>).

Prayer Resources

Resources for prayer leaders can be found on the Resources page of the Synod of Mid-America website: http://msyn.org/index_files/resources.htm.

H.O.P.E. Prayerline

The Prayerline issue for February focuses on beginning Lent in prayer. "The time of Lent is quickly approaching, and it brings an opportunity for us to deepen our relationship with God through prayer and intentional closeness with the Savior. This issue offers some prompts on how to deepen the experience of the cross in your life as you live more for Christ." This month's issue of the [HOPE \(Houses of Prayer Equipping\) Prayerline](#) newsletter can be found at this link: <http://www.rca.org/Page.aspx?pid=6328>. Here are some articles in this month's issue:



- Going Deeper--David Muyskens invites readers to find a deep, peaceful place in their souls.
- 40 Days of Discipline: A Journey to the Cross--Nola Boezeman shares how a study of spiritual disciplines can transform your life.
- Deeper Prayerful Lent--Scott Crane explores how humility is a vital part of understanding Lent.

Celebration Stories

The story in this issue comes to us from the Sheboygan Press. It is a story they did in late January about Remedy, the new church start coming out of Bethany Reformed Church being led by Bob Abel. Here is a taste of the article followed by the link to the full article:

Sharing the "Remedy" – Casual service opens doors, arms to downtown, community

If you're looking for God but prefer a casual, unassuming atmosphere, then the Rev. Bob Abel hopes you will join him at Remedy, located in the heart of downtown Sheboygan. No pews, altars or candelabras don the open space that hosts the new worship service that is Remedy, a satellite division of Bethany Reformed Church. Instead, there are round tables surrounded with chairs, a small stage for the contemporary worship band and a table with coffee available — all designed to give a coffeehouse-casual atmosphere. "The service was a blessing," said Joyce Strade, 48, of Sheboygan. "If it weren't (held) downtown I wouldn't have heard it. I would have had a very, very rough day."

To read the full article, follow this link:

<http://www.sheboyganpress.com/article/20100129/SHE04/1290369>

To read the full article without the advertising (print view), follow this link:

<http://www.sheboyganpress.com/print/article/20100129/SHE04/1290369/Sharing-the-Remedy>

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 whole ministry and stories of the multiplication of ministries to Randy Kooy at rkooy@rca.org.

From Wayne Van Regenmorter, Synod Visionary Leader (wvanregenmorter@rca.org):

The Message of Credibility...

One of the key areas of learning for the pastors and congregational leaders involved in the Ridder Leadership Initiative (The Big MO) led by Jim Herrington and Trisha Taylor centers around the area of integrity. Am I doing what I say I will do when I say I will do it? Am I keeping my word? And when I can't keep my word, am I cleaning up my messes and thus honoring my word? Am I more interested in looking good in the eyes of other people than I am about my own integrity? All of this results in one of the acid tests of true leadership which is credibility.

Our credibility in the churches God calls us to lead is recognized by our commitment to honesty, integrity and fairness. Greg Morris, author of the book [In Pursuit of Leadership](#) says that credibility forms the foundation not only of leadership but of relationships. Credibility gives the leader the authority to lead as it builds trust and loyalty within your church or ministry. He writes: "One of the by-products of credibility is increased influence. The more confidence people place in you and your leadership the greater influence you will have. Cavett Roberts has observed; 'If my people trust me, I'll get their action.'"

In an article entitled "A Crises in Credibility" Morris says, "Your credibility is not the result of a position or title. It isn't gained in a seminar, symposium or workshop. Credibility is a lifestyle, not a single event; a pilgrimage rather than an incident. There are no shortcuts to credibility, as it is only earned over time and sadly, as we well know, it can all be lost in a moment with a careless word, an inappropriate action or an indiscretion. Image and reputation is what people think you are; credibility determines what you really are."

Morris suggests that if credibility is to be the hallmark of our lives and our leadership, we will need to make the following commitments daily:

1. **I will do what I say.** Are you the same person, no matter who you are with or what the circumstances?
2. **I will live what I teach.** Despite the difficulty, can others model your behavior as well as your words?
3. **I will be honest with others.** Whatever the personal cost, are you committed to absolute honesty?
4. **I will put what is best for others ahead of what is best for me.** Do you make decisions that are best for you when another choice would benefit others?
5. **I will be genuine, transparent, authentic and even vulnerable.** Is the "visible" you and the "real" you consistent?

Our leadership in the church isn't a place of position as much as it is the positioning of character. And credibility is the distinguishing mark of character.

Carole Mayhall summarized well the message of credibility; "The how of being people worth listening to is by letting our lives be filled with God Himself. The why of being people worth listening to is because we are His and He wants us to radiate Him." As we seek to live our lives with honesty and integrity it will impact those around us with the transforming message of the Gospel. Only as credibility characterizes the way we daily conduct our lives will others listen to that message. Martin Luther, the great reformer pronounced a brief, but expressive eulogy at the funeral of Nicholas Haussmann, a pastor at Zwickau: "What we preach, he lived." Could a similar commentary be spoken of our leadership as we lead in the places where God has called us?

Schedule:

February 8: Meeting/Oak Brook, IL

9: Illiana Church Multiplication Team Meeting/Faith Church/Dyer, IN

10: Illiana Classis Executive Committee/Dyer, IN; Staff meeting

11: Coaching/Office

12: Meeting/South Holland, IL

13: Off

- 14: Travel to Florida
- 15: Meetings/Deerfield Beach, FL; Bradenton, FL
- 16: Meeting/Rolling Hills Community Church, Zellwood, FL
- 17: Office
- 18: Meeting/The Bridge/St. Charles, MO
- 19: Ridley Assessment/St. Peters, MO
- 20: Chicago Classis Meeting/Calvary Reformed Church, Orland Park, IL
- 21: Sunday Worship

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

Here are a few links to on-line articles that one may find interesting or helpful:

Churches still meeting needs, despite financial struggles from Ministry Today Magazine

<http://www.ministrytodaymag.com/index.php/ministry-news/65/18793>

Despite ongoing financial difficulties and increased joblessness in many communities, most churches are pressing on to help those in need. So says a LifeWay Research survey of more than 1,000 pastors that discovered the overwhelming majority of churches have yet to experience any kind of economic rebound from the recession. In fact, the report indicates most churches may be experiencing tougher times than a year ago. Almost three out of 10 churches (29 percent) represented in the survey indicated that giving was down from a year prior, while more than two-thirds (35 percent) had experienced a plateau in tithes and offerings. Of those churches whose giving had declined, 18 percent had experienced a drop of 10 percent or more.

The 'in-between' bunch: Using interns in your ministry from Youth Worker

<http://www.youthworker.com/youth-pastor-jobs-training/11624019/>

"Can anyone help me with all these young people?" It's a common cry heard from youth workers. Volunteers can do a great deal to enrich our programs, but there is one unalterable fact about volunteers: They can quit if they want to because they're not held accountable by money or a church staff. Even with a large staff of dedicated volunteers, we often need someone who can give extra amounts of time to personal contact, administration and youth programming. When you need more than a youth ministry volunteer can give, but you're not looking for another you, an intern may be the answer.

The state of social media in churches from Your Church

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/yc/managersources/other/thestateofsocialmediapart1.html>

The social nature of media will continue to converge in ways we cannot imagine during the next five years. As church leaders, it is important to understand the state of social networking, and the directions of these participatory technologies. These tools may promise significant benefits to churches, who seek to build community, mobilize congregations, and offer greater interaction with unbelievers. And an understanding today leads to better action today and better planning for tomorrow.

11 easy steps to a successful children's ministry from LifeWay

<http://www.lifeway.com/article/?id=165153>

Life is full and you're a busy person! You already know that leading children is a 24/7 endeavor. Here are a few tips and treasures for you to ponder as you go that will help you become more effective as you lead children to love Jesus.

Seismic change is coming to the church in a new demography from Church Executive Magazine

<http://www.churchexecutive.com/article.asp?IndexID=1321>

There is a new U.S. demography on the horizon. The demographics in several key areas are shifting in the early 21st century. They aren't your father's population trends, and the church must be positioned to better serve the changing culture. There is much to be learned from the spiritual successes of previous decades, but there are also new challenges in society today. No church body desires to phase out

because they didn't attract new people. How local churches address these macro changes in demography, however, will either help or hinder their part in God's Gospel mission.

Faithful Finances: When to Adopt New Technology from Alban Institute

<http://www.alban.org/conversation.aspx?id=8901>

The church I attend finally took the plunge last fall: our newsletter now comes by e-mail. Budget cuts made what had been unthinkable seem plausible. But plausible is not the same as right. How can we evaluate the costs and benefits of using new technologies to make sure we adopt the right ones at the right moment?

Houses of worship - still divided by race from Atlanta Journal-Constitution

<http://www.ajc.com/news/houses-of-worship-still-276679.html>

Eleven o'clock on Sunday morning is the most segregated hour in America, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. said in 1963. If churches want to repent and move into the arena of social reform, King said, they must first "remove the yoke of segregation" from their own bodies. More than 40 years after King's death, Protestant churches are still one of the most prominent social institutions that remain monochromatic. There are exceptions, from the Mennonite church's effort in the 1960s to form an interracial congregation to the recent growth of a mixed congregation at the church of Southern Baptist stalwart the Rev. Charles Stanley.

Preparing for Easter church guests from Baptist Press

<http://www.bpnews.net/BPFirstPerson.asp?ID=32199>

You've inundated your town with prayer and printed invitations to worship at your church on Easter. The nationwide GPS (God's Plan for Sharing) media blitz has reinforced those efforts. You have a sudden, terrifying thought ... "What if they all show up?!" Here are some fresh ideas for getting ready for your Easter service.

How does a church leader know when it's time to go? from Church Central

<http://www.churchcentral.com/blog/How-Does-a-Church-Leader-Know-When-It%27s-Time-to-Go?>

How do you discern when it's time to quit? Leaders need persistence. You have to be able to keep going when the going gets rough, because leadership is almost never easy. Whether you are leading in a family, a church, a school or a denomination, there will be moments when you think, "Why am I doing this? It's just too hard." It's not easy to know when to be patient and wait for the results, and when to say, enough, already.

How clean carpet impacts your church from Church Executive Magazine

<http://www.churchexecutive.com/article.asp?IndexID=1333>

Day care or child care facilities are a mainstay of many churches and church-supported schools. The benefits of these facilities to parents are innumerable, including the assurance that their children are in a safe, nurturing environment under the care of supportive, qualified adults. However, when a mother picks up her crawling baby from a church day-care or child care facility and notices soiled areas on the knees of the baby's outfit, the positives can quickly shift to negatives. This happens every day in child care facilities -- and to be fair, homes -- across the country as a direct result of a poorly cleaned carpet. Considering that the soils and pollutants trapped in the carpet can include mold spores, fungi, weed killer, and animal fecal matter, in addition to clay, sand, leaves, and grass clippings, concerns can escalate.

Schedule:

February 8 – DeMotte office

9 – DeMotte office

10 – Illiana Exec Team mtg AM; Manitoqua office – staff mtg PM

11 – DeMotte office

12 – DeMotte office

15 – DeMotte office

16 – DeMotte office

17 – Manitoqua office

18 – DeMotte office

19 – DeMotte office

20 – Chicago Classis meeting, Calvary, Orland Park

The Manitoqua office phone number can more consistently reach me wherever I am as it is usually forwarded to my current location.

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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.

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