

# THE CURRENT WORD



## LAKE NOKOMIS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

February 2008

### Anguish Over Jerusalem ~

As we face a new year, 2008, I ask the question: "When Lord, when?" There is a saying in Palestine and Israel: "Next year in Jerusalem!" which is said as a promise and hope that God will appear and peace will reign. It is also used by people worldwide to refer to our faith that hope triumphs over despair, ultimately. Yet cries from the suffering and oppressed cry out. Ever since I was able to personally go into Gaza in a visit in 1992, I have had images of the incredible poverty and desperation and hopelessness of the Palestinians, in the overwhelming military presence of Israel. I have included as part of my continuing prayers for Jerusalem and for Gaza, this recent letter, so we might not forget to pray and to work for the peace of Jerusalem. May Jerusalem become a world peace city, held in reverence and in peace by all!

....continued on page ..

**Begin a reflective season together ~**

**Ash Wednesday Supper and Service**  
**February 6**  
**6:30 p.m.**



*Inside: the Ham and Cherry Pie Dinner rides again!!  
Update from the PNC (Pastor Nominating Committee)  
CPR Training coming to LNPC  
2008 Budget commentary  
San Francisco Presbytery approves a scruple (see what that means!)*

## THE VIEW FROM C.E.

Bill Fischer - Christian Ed. Team

We've wrapped up a pretty good year in Christian Ed. I am no longer on Session but will remain on the C.E. committee if Terry can stand me.

The pre-scholars that dominated the children's' Sunday school a couple of years ago appear to have been replaced by young, elementary-age school children. I'm not sure what happened.

According to Terry, the average attendance per Sunday was about three. Now that's an average and remembers what Mark Twain said about statistics:

*"There are three kinds of lies: Lies, Damned Lies and Statistics"  
...Samuel B. (Mark Twain) Clemens*

In other words, the average may obscure the fact that on any given Easter, if there's a wedding coupled with a baptism and funeral, and we hold confirmation Sunday the same day, it could be as many as *six* children in the Sunday school class.

They were using a curriculum called "Seasons in the Spirit" and I don't believe that that one has been used for that long at Lake Nokomis. Help me out here – three years, perhaps? [*at least... ed.*]

With the adult classes this month we have spent about three weeks discussing Chris Hedges' book, *American Fascist*, in context with our look at the **R**eligious **R**ight.

This is an important topic for every person at Lake Nokomis because...

- We a part of a larger denomination, called the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America.
- Certain (but not all) elements of this **R**eligious **R**ight have attempted to infiltrate and change the direction of this denomination: to turn it into a form of Christianity that is not the traditional, Presbyterian denomination with which many of us grew up.
- These elements, failing to seize control of many Presbyteries (such as ours) have responded by fomenting schism – a split – which has cost our church (that's our Presbytery, Synod *and* Parish Church) membership and funding.

Let me state my own feeling about this subject so everyone is clear about where I stand:

- I do not believe that every conservative, Pentecostal Christian is out to take over my church.

- I do not believe that every conservative, Pentecostal preacher is out to bilk the indigent and unemployed and aged out of their last welfare dollar, while flying around in a Lear Jet.
- I believe, however that a few are, they're looking at us and we need to take the time to look back - real hard!
- Finally – NO: Bill Fischer does NOT “hate” fundamentalists. My first church in this state as a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader, was in a “free”, Pentecostal congregation – they were wonderful, good people. A little too literal on the Bible end but I liked ‘em. My cousin, who passed away far too young, of a disease that Benny Hinn once tried – and failed – to “cure”, died a Pentecostal – believing in Jesus as her personal savior and redeemer. I have no doubts that she will ascend to the “Church Triumphant” for her faith.
- I believe that the **R**eligious **R**ight has its Saints, its Sinners and its Clowns – we (Presbyterians) need to learn the difference. And we do that by learning.

And that has been the thrust of my classes these past few weeks.

As of this writing I will begin a three-Sunday series of Church Polity classes for incoming officers and Wayne is going to pick up where I left off.

I'm confident that he can put lots of Greek on the whiteboard as well as Melissa Scott and me.

See. If you'd been attending our classes, you'd know who I was talking about!

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffman



## WHAT HAPPENED AT PRESBYTERY

*By Bill Fischer*

Normally, January is the one meeting of the year which I expect to be drawn out, emotional and contentious. This is because it has become known as the 'Bills and Overtures' meeting or the 'Bylaws and Resolutions' meeting, depending on the person with whom you are speaking.

This past month we met at House of Hope Presbyterian Church in St. Paul. It is a beautiful, old 'Romanesque' type of church laid out, à la Westminster, in a European, cathedral style.

No really contentious resolutions, letters or motions were discussed this year: we're not going to re-commence burning witches, at least not this year, and no one debated for hours over how many angels could fit on the head of pin, and if they could, would they have souls, or are they actually souls themselves because they're angels, etc.

Frankly, having girded my loins for battle, I was almost disappointed. Not that at my age, it's all that easy to find a gird that fits me.

No one introduced a motion to make Tim La Haye's, Left Behind series required viewing for all church officers. Actually, that might not be a bad idea....

OK, we did have a small discussion about amending the Presbytery Bylaws. The most salient of these were:

- **Stated meetings of the Presbytery will be reduced** to the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays of January and April and the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of July and October unless otherwise specified by the Council. – **This passed** with an amendment, but with the **proviso** that no further action would be taken on this until a manual of operations for this has been published. There was mostly debate on whether to accept the amendment to the supplemental addition to the supplement of this amendment.
- **All committees should be required to have membership on the Presbytery Council.** The rationale here is that their role on the council is to report on the committee's work, but, since (1) some committees' work is very confidential and we cannot tell the council about it (because it's none of their bloomin' business) and (2) it has the de facto effect of placing some committees (such as COM and CPM) responsible to the council when their constitutional mandate is responsibility only to the Presbytery at large. An effort to get CPM and COM exempted **failed to pass**. That's OK. As a member of CPM I still consider my first responsibility to the Presbytery and I am not about to, as a matter of ethics and conscience, divulge the

creepy, psychiatric history of that nice, young enquirer from Bob Jones School of Divinity to the Presbytery Council no matter how much they pull rank on me.

Let's see... was there anything else...?? Hmm... Anything at all...?  
There was something else..... Oh, yes!

Sue Goodspeed is going to General Assembly ☺ *[the biennial meeting of the PC(USA), being held this year in San Jose, and in 2010 in Minneapolis! - ed.]*

..along with Elders Terry Schermer from Buffalo (Minnesota, not New York), Tom Soulen from Minneapolis Westminster and Brenda Tiefenbruck from Hastings "Old First".

There was one challenge to the ballot by our brethren and sistern at North Como, who submitted a nomination from the floor on the rationale that we need "choices". This is understandable as they were caught off guard by the short notice of only twelve month's warning.

The Minister members who will be going along to ensure that Elder Goodspeed behaves herself are: Rev. April Davis Campbell, Stillwater First, Rev. Walter F. Chuquimia, Minneapolis Familia De Fe NCD, Rev. Andrew Lindahl, Austin Westminster, and Rev. Cynthia Ray, Shakopee First.

Dale Utt from Rochester, First P.C. is the lone, Youth Advisory Delegate and at this writing, I think they're still looking for an alternate YAD.

Finally...

As of this writing I am preparing to go to a special meeting of Presbytery on January 26 to debate the reinstatement to Ministry of Word and Sacrament of my friend, Dr. Paul Capetz.

Almost half a decade ago, I walked with a fellow chaperone along the crunchy, dusty road in the hills above Lake Balaton in Hungary engaged in conversation. I told this partner, who is currently a Presbyterian pastor serving the Church of Scotland in Glasgow, that I worried that one day, my own convictions (about justice and the Christian path) might put me at direct odds with my own denomination.

She stopped, there, by the vineyards, looking at me and said, "Bill, if you're a Christian with any real conscience, you'll always be at odds with your denomination." Amen.

## GOOD HEALTH TO ALL!

The holidays have past, and what a busy year everyone has had! Is there a medical diagnosis you just don't understand? Are there medications you use without being sure just why? There are many things that can be answered in this space - let us know what you need!

On February 3<sup>rd</sup>, there will be an after-church presentation on First Aid. We will explain to members and friends how the new First Aid Kits in the library and kitchen can be used to help those who are hurt, and how to know when additional care is needed.

Deacons are also working on setting a date for a CPR class to be held in April. Other speakers are also being sought to update us on other issues of health and aging.

*Respectfully*

*Kathryn Sathre, LPN, Parish Nurse volunteer*



### **COMING IN APRIL:**

#### **CPR TRAINING FOR LNPC AND FRIENDS**

*A 3-hour class will be taught by a licensed CPR coach to the first 12 people who sign up.*

#### **LEARN A LIFE-SAVING SKILL**

*Watch for more information: in the Library, on the web, in this space.....*

**Pastor Nominating Committee:** the PNC, as reported at the annual meeting, has completed the Church Information Form, which has been approved by Session and the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery. It has been entered online on the denominational website, and our first set of "matches" - candidates looking for positions who have skills similar to those which we identified as our needs - should reach us soon. From there, we read.. and read.. and read... We are also requesting recommendations from seminaries, and placing ads in the Presbyterian Outlook and with the Covenant Network of Presbyterians (a group dedicated to opening ordained ministry - as Elders, Deacons, or Ministers of Word and Sacrament - to *all* Christians who are called to serve the church).

## Food for Thought and Prayer: ... bringing issues and the church's theological struggle together...

*[from Covenant Network moderator Pam Byers]*

"My heart is filled with gratitude as share with you all the wonderful news that San Francisco Presbytery voted last night to accept our CPM's recommendation finding Lisa Larges "ready for examination [i.e. for ordination], with a departure." The vote was very close - 167-151; but you know, we'll take it! This is the first time any presbytery has actually applied the process of considering (and in this case accepting) a ministerial candidate's "departure" from an ordination standard, anywhere in the church.... [The CPM] followed exactly the process envisioned by the Theological Task Force and approved by the 2006 General Assembly... ..

CPM was aided in its discernment of Lisa's many gifts for ministry, by the fact that she has been under care in this presbytery for ten years. **She transferred her candidacy here after twelve years as an inquirer and candidate in Twin Cities Presbytery.**

They looked at the full and gifted person they knew and determined that in Lisa's specific case, her declaration of departure from G-6.0106b ("Amendment B") did not constitute "a failure to adhere to the essentials of Reformed faith and polity." I am enormously grateful that a majority of our presbytery upheld their discernment. An out lesbian, she currently serves as Minister Coordinator of That All May Freely Serve. She is a

particularly gifted preacher. [This] is only the first of what we hope will be many such steps - slow but essential - to help move our church toward celebrating the gifts of all whom God calls to ordained service. **Our thoughts and prayers turn now to the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area, which will consider our friend Paul Capetz's request for reinstatement as Minister of the Word and Sacrament, at a special called meeting on January 26....**

[W]e have a long way to go to reach our goal of being even a proximate representation of the reign of God.

But I am very grateful indeed:

-For the thoughtful and prayerful work of our CPM;

-For the Spirit-led action of the Theological Task Force, and the 2006 G.A. commissioners;..

-And most of all, for Lisa's own faith and patience and humor and winsome witness, and for her remarkable desire to offer her many gifts to the PC(USA)...

We are just now entering Ordinary Time -when the daily work and witness of the church takes place. We have put away the Christmas "Glorias" and even the Epiphany stars. But the amazing gift of Immanuel - God with us - guides and leads and sustains us on our way. Last night surely felt like a manifestation of that gift and that presence.

It's official - the Ham and Cherry Pie Dinner is on!!! Thanks to the leadership of Gary Johnson and the work of our amazing crew, dinner will be served ~



**Wednesday, February 13**

**5:00 to 6:30 p.m.**

**cost: \$10**

**\$5 2-12 yrs, under 2 - free**

**Bring family, friends, and anyone you can find for a wonderful meal of Ham, Meatballs, AuGratin Potatoes, Green Beans, Sweet Potatoes, and ..... CHERRY PIE!**

**The congregation elected new leaders** at the Annual Meeting on January 20<sup>th</sup>:  
Session Class of 2010: Aleta Isaacson, Jane Kutz, Norm Petrik.

Deacons class of 2010: Marge Bantle, Eva Webb, and Pat Niznick.

Tremendous thanks to Bill Fischer, Joyce Tesarek and Barbora Wilson who are going off of Session; and to Butch Goodspeed, Aleta Isaacson and Marg Saxrud who are going off the Deacons.

#### **News and Notes from those we love:**

"We appreciate your dedication and stamina and obviously your financial contributions that allows LNPC to weather the storm in your quest for new members. Lois and I have both faced some health problems. Lois is apparently getting along fine with her cancer check-ups but I have some fast heartbeat problems that the Dr. can't seem to resolve. As they say, Florida is Heaven's Waiting Room and we are prepared, but not anxious for the next step to happen.

Lois and Don Bodin

"A big "Thank You" to everyone who remembered us at Christmas. Lake Nokomis and all the special people doing God's work are very special to us and will always be our 'home' church, and continue to be in our thoughts and prayers."

Marlys and Warren Schluck

Want to help give to LNPC missions? Bazaar proceeds go to mission. As you clean out your home/closet, remember the November Bazaar! Household, treasures, antiques (but NO CLOTHES).

Mark your calendars: LNPC has signed up to prepare and serve meals at Simpson shelters on the following dates during 2008:

Women's Shelter: Sundays, March 9, May 4, and October 12

Men's Shelter: Sunday, August 17

Watch for your opportunity to help!



**Notes on the 2008 Budget:** The 2008 budget was approved by Session and presented to the congregation at the annual meeting. The \$151,115 in expenditures is essentially flat from 2007, with the exception of expenses related to bringing a new pastor to our congregation. A negotiable, and perhaps unnecessary, moving expense (cap) of \$10,000 is included, as well as \$3,000 for the PNC expenses: advertising, long distance phone/conference calls, and travel expenses for final interviews. Pledges of \$90,140 have been received or are reasonably expected. Other income is anticipated to be \$11,576.

The checking account balance forward to 2008 is the strongest in years. This is primarily due to the generous bequest from the estate of Dorothy Swanson, but also reflects prudent spending and disciplined giving.

A particularly positive note is that, though natural gas costs/unit have increased greatly, our heating bills are less now than they were prior to installing the new furnace. Good stewardship - of resources and our environment - sometimes involves a significant expense.

*Thanks*

Session has offered our basement back-room space to the Americana Classic Jazz Orchestra for rehearsals Saturday mornings, from 10 a.m. to noon. Their leader, Ted Unseth, writes: "Thank you for your trust [we gave him a key] and helpfulness. We couldn't have been treated better... I've got some real talent here and we had moments today that were almost 'there' - the Feel. I'm just thrilled to be working with musicians again... You've provided a wonderful opportunity for me and the ACJO."

... continued from page 1...

*"January 23, 2008*

*WCC asks for prayers, advocacy and solidarity with churches in Gaza*, by Jerry L. Van Marter, Presbyterian News Service, and Juan Michel WCC News and Information

GENEVA — In a letter issued today (Jan. 23), the World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia called on the Council's 347 member churches around the world to pray for the end of the suffering in Gaza and speak out for the people in Gaza to their governments.

Kobia was responding to a statement issued Jan.22 by the heads of churches in Jerusalem and the Holy Land calling on the international community and the state of Israel to end the current siege on the Gaza Strip which has caused most recently cuts in electricity and limited the shipments of medicine, fuel, food and other goods across the border.

The statement urged Palestinians to unite in ending their differences for the sake of the people in Gaza and urged Israel to act responsibly.

"Address your parishes, the public, your governments and the embassies," Kobia writes, "calling for an end to the siege, an end to their collective punishments and a negotiated ceasefire."

The letter urges churches to manifest solidarity with the churches in Palestine by supporting the work done by local churches on the ground and church-related agencies like Action by Churches Together. *Wayne*

*Gracious God, we pray for the people of Kenya. Lead the people to work to end the violence against women — to end the violence against all. Guide those who seek justice and an end to rioting. Grant courage, strength and vision for these days. Inspire the leaders to create a fare agreement that brings reconciliation and establishes true peace based on justice. In Jesus' name we pray.*

*— based on an email by Jaqueline Ogega  
Director of the Women's Program, Religions for Peace*

Wayne Herstad - Interim Pastor  
and Moderator of Session

### **2008 Session**

Class of 2008: Terry Gilberstadt

Gary Johnson

Lisa Phillips Johnson

Class of 2009: Sue Hensel

Diane Hansen

Dick Gross

Class of 2010: Aleta Isaacson

Jane Kutz

Norm Petrik

Presbytery Commissioners -

Bill Fischer, Sue Goodspeed

Dennis Johnson – Clerk

Butch Goodspeed - Treasurer

### **Staff:**

Jan Johnson – *secretary*

Andrew Crow – *choir coach\**

Andrew Tessman – *organist*

Rodney Seek (Best Way) – *custodian\**

*\*(contract position)*

Editor - Sue Goodspeed

### **MISSION STATEMENT - LNPC**

(as approved with the Revision Statement  
of October, 2007)

#### **The Mission of LNPC is**

**- to become a beacon of hope and a  
place of sanctuary**

**- to reach out to the needs of  
neighbors, sharing our selves and  
our resources.**

**Committees of Session:** Administration (TBD), Worship (TBD), Membership (TBD),  
Education (TBD), Personnel (TBD).

If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, interests or *anything* you'd just like to  
share, please talk with a Session member!

**Board of Deacons:** The Deacons function as a unit, sharing responsibility for visitation  
and ministries of presence with those in transition. Members are: Marge Bantle, John  
Bixby, Butch Sue Goodspeed, JoAnne Hansen, Betty Johnson, Bobbe Larson, Georgia  
Mrosla, Pat Niznick, and Eva Webb, and Kathryn Sathre, Parish Nurse Associate.

### **Prayer Network**

We have been called to communicate with God through prayer. God encourages us to  
pray for one another and has promised to answer. To enable us to pray effectively for one  
another and for our church, the LNPC Prayer Network has been organized. Call Pat  
Erickson, coordinator (612-925-4418) with prayer requests.