



The Grapevine

CONNECTING THE CONGREGATIONS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF DETROIT

October 2008

Sharing in Mission

by the Rev. Dr. Allen D. Timm, Executive Presbyter

Dear Members of Detroit Presbytery,

This year at the month of Mission breakfast, held at Jefferson Avenue Church, with 150 in attendance, those who gathered heard many stories about how God is at work. There were speakers from many countries: an administrator of a mission school in Germany, a retired pastor of a church in Japan, a physician from Congo, an evangelist from Bangladesh, as well as the Synod's ecumenical partner the Rev. Ben Willy Aringan, from Papua New Guinea. We heard from the Rev. Patricia Lloyd-Sidle, the area Coordinator for Cuba, which has 13,000 Presbyterians in over 30 congregations.



I was moved to tell you a few stories about the work, because this mission is vital; and we as a presbytery need to support it. I can't share all the stories, but the work in East and West Africa caught my attention.

Elder Caryl Weinberg, a nurse educator who was called to missionary work, until recently, taught women how to avoid AIDS. She started with the Presbyterian Churches in East Africa, and then was assigned to the same work in West Africa. The other missionary who spoke about AIDS in Africa was the Rev. Janet Guyer, who is stationed in West Africa by the PCUSA.

The women said that women who contract AIDS soon find themselves on a downward spiral. Poor health affects the ability to work. Then there is no money for food or educational fees. Parents die young, leaving orphaned children to care for younger children. Her work was with the churches and pastors. First she would try to raise awareness that church members were getting AIDS, as well as others in the community who needed the church's outreach. She then hosted meetings to talk to the women about how to prevent contracting AIDS. Then they helped to open clinics for treatment. The other very important aspect of their work is sharing the hope of the gospel. The hope Jesus Christ gives, enables the people they reached to have dignity and to want to prevent AIDS or if they had AIDS, to work at a treatment plan.

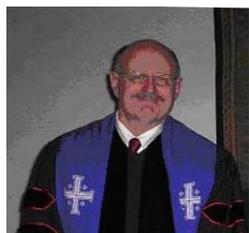
Another story was told about a Christian school in Pakistan where the Rev. Robert Johnson and his wife, Marianne Vermeer work as missionaries at the Forman School. Though the school was founded by Presbyterians in 1860, the government confiscated it and expelled the Presbyterians in the 1970's. In 1994 the government returned the school to the Presbyterian Church, as long as Muslims could attend. Today the school has 4200 students, 700 of whom are Christians.

What a witness to Pakistan Muslims, that Presbyterian Christians would run such a school. The school gives the Christians a unique opportunity to show Christians and Muslims can live side by side, as well as an excellent opportunity to witness to faith in Jesus Christ. But here is the sad thing – due to funding, and the ability to recruit new missionaries, today where the PCUSA once had 250 missionaries, now there are only two.

These are just a few of the stories we heard that morning. These missionaries need our support. They need to continue the vital work of sharing the love and justice of Jesus Christ, and give people the opportunity to call on him their Lord and Savior.

The missions of the Presbytery of Detroit, Synod of the Covenant, and General Assembly are life changing and vital. Please consider giving a sacrificial gift this year to Shared Mission. And we ask this year that you will even go beyond that. Pick a mission in the Presbytery, Synod, or General Assembly, and direct some of your giving to a budgeted program.

If you would like a visit at your session, or for me to preach, please give me a call.



Faithfully yours,

Allen D. Timm

The Rev. Dr. Allen D. Timm
Executive Presbyter

Presbytery of Detroit

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
17575 Hubbell Ave, Detroit, MI 48235
313-345-6550
866-345-6550 (toll free in Michigan)
313-345-7250 (fax)
Info@detroitpresbytery.org
<http://www.detroitpresbytery.org>
<http://www.PbyDetroit.org> (for documents)
<http://www.synodofthecovenant.org>
<http://www.pcusa.org>

Staff

Executive Presbyter
The Rev. Dr. Allen D. Timm, ext. 203
Assoc. Exec. Presbyter for Outreach & Nurture
Elder Brenda Jarvis, ext. 213
Stated Clerk
The Rev. Edward H. Koster, ext. 201
Director of Outdoor Ministries
Richard Grant, 517-546-0249
Resource Center Director
Joanne Higgins, ext. 215
Hunger Action Coordinator
Artheillia Thompson, ext. 207
Executive Assistant
Beverly Knox, ext. 204

Office Manager

Sandra K. Jensen, ext. 220
Accounting Manager
Bev Auger, ext. 209
Office & Bookkeeping Clerk
Rhonda Roberts, ext. 200
Office Assistant
Sharon Pacioni, ext. 206
Consultants
Hands-on Mission
Mary Lloyd, 313-247-0792
Transformation
The Rev. Karen Carl, 734-213-5919
Interfaith Ministries
The Rev. Wm Gepford, 313-933-4086

THE PARISH PAPER

IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

Coeditors: Herb Miller, Lyle Schaller, Cynthia Woolever - www.TheParishPaper.com

November 2008 - Volume 16, Number 11

Herb Miller

The Fun Factor Asset in Congregational Climate

Any meeting Charlie chairs is fun. People don't resent giving time to it. They enjoy the discussions. Afterward, they linger to chat. Why? Charlie's attitude and style creates a positive emotional climate.

Any meeting Andy chairs feels dreary. People attend reluctantly. They exit like rifle shots as it ends. Why? Andy's attitude and style creates a negative emotional climate.

As with every type of human group, every congregation possesses a distinctive emotional climate. Some churches are joyful places. Some are depressing. Some are angry and blaming. Why? The active laypersons and the pastor unconsciously set the congregation's emotional thermostat (sometimes *previous* lay leaders or pastors set the thermostat in ways that still exert influence).

Emotional climate is among the most influential causes of congregational effectiveness and vitality.

How Does a Fun Climate Foster Effectiveness?

Emotions are contagious. The emerging science of MRI brain research reveals that "mirror neurons" in our brain's amygdala make the feelings we witness in others flow through us—even when we don't want them to. When people around us display a strong emotion such as sadness, disgust, or joy, our facial muscles and internal feelings automatically start to mirror those feelings. Like a virus, people quickly catch emotional feelings from others in their group.

Even more dramatic research data reveals that when we feel chronically angered, depressed, or encouraged by people with whom we frequently spend time, the experience physiologically rewires our brain's neural circuitry! Our thinking patterns become similar to, and thus perpetuate, the emotional climate of individuals with whom we frequently associate.

Crowd contagion happens in the smallest of groups. When three people sit with one another in silence for a few minutes—in the absence of a power hierarchy—the person with the most emotionally expressive face sets the group's emotional climate. The other two people soon feel the same way she or he feels. Their shared feeling biases how each person processes new information and the decisions they prefer. (Daniel Goleman, *Social Intelligence* [New York: Random House, Inc. 2006])

What Are the Positive Results of a Fun Climate?

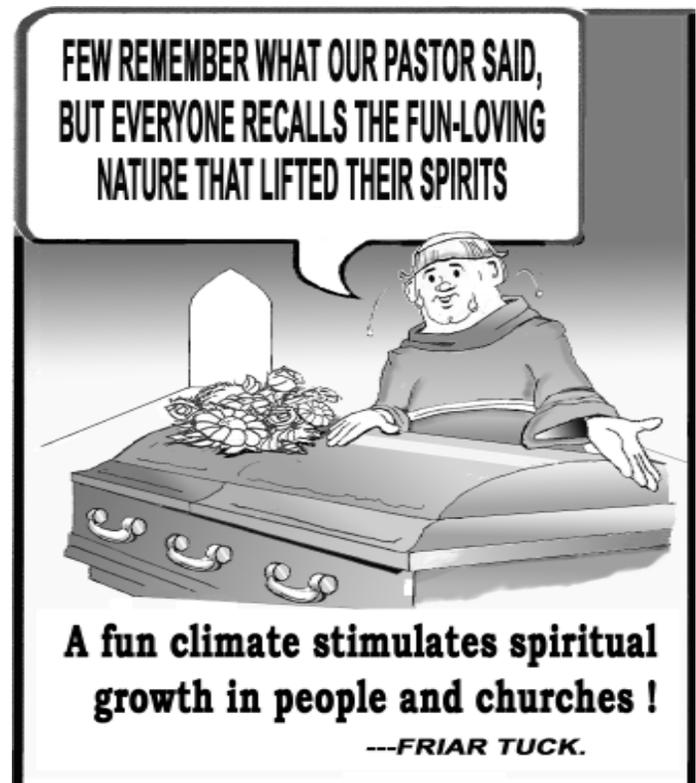
Congregations in which the fun factor dominates the emotional climate experience at least a dozen benefits:

1. *People feel better.* A fun climate stimulates the release of serotonin (95 percent of which is secreted in the digestive tract). Serotonin is the neurotransmitter that generates feelings of well-being in the brain.

2. *People feel closer.* Humor creates camaraderie. Laughter is often the shortest distance between two brains, infectiously spreading an instant social bond.

3. *People learn more.* Excellent schools are ones in which kids have fun. Remember the teacher from whom you learned the most? Was he or she sour or fun-loving?

4. *Better communication.* The percentage of humor required for effective communication differs across cultures and centuries—often influenced by how other important communication happens. In a TV-saturated culture, serious messages totally devoid of humor are often like the proverbial tree falling in an unpopulated forest.



5. *Increased motivation.* People not only pay more attention to a speaker; they more often read letters and show up at meetings.

6. *Receptivity to new ideas.* Smiles reduce resistance to unfamiliar concepts. The human brain prefers happy faces, an effect that neuroscientists call “the happy face advantage.” Why are people more receptive to leaders who possess charisma? Such individuals, especially if they have an effective sense of humor, quickly engage others into synchrony with their feelings and opinions.

7. *Greater creativity.* Why do humor and creativity often travel together? Both qualities tie two things together in a new way. A fun-permeated group gains a creativity advantage.

8. *Faster problem solving.* Capable facilitators often launch a brainstorming session with humor. Example: a business leader asks attendees to give their names, jobs, and one thing they might prefer to do instead of spending time in this meeting.

9. *Better teamwork.* Any time people share strong emotions—positive or negative—they become more energetic team members.

10. *Tension reducer.* A smile and humor buffers the pain of an inappropriate gaff by someone in the group. Fun doesn’t eliminate the disappointment or bad news, but it helps reconstitute a group’s good mood. Using humor to defuse a tense situation helps people regain perspective and stay cool under pressure.

11. *Fewer negative reactions.* Less negativity translates into more regular worship attendance, greater participation in various ministries, and less backdoor traffic toward inactive status or membership transfers.

12. *Transmits God’s love and acceptance.* One of the major ways churches transmit the gift of God’s love is through fun-filled social interactions. No, the gift and the wrapping paper are *not* identical! Humor cannot substitute for substance. Yet, for many people, the feel of a congregation’s social-interaction package influences their receptivity to the best gift on earth.

How Do We NOT Create a Fun Climate?

Everyone has witnessed inappropriate, no-no methods. Five prescriptions:

1. *Avoid puns.* More than one pun per hour overdoses the typical listener. People often feel that nonstop punsters make a greater contribution by their absence from meetings.

2. *Avoid sarcasm and cynicism.* That style of humor often masks hostility and resentment—negative qualities instantly noticed by hearers but seldom recognized by sarcastic speakers.

3. *Avoid classic joke-telling.* More than two per hour subtracts more from a fun atmosphere than they add. Rarely does an old joke successfully address the topic at hand. More often, it negatively focuses attention on the jokester.

4. *Avoid substituting humor for positive personality traits.* He is always cracking a joke, but friends often describe him as intimidating, bad-tempered, self-centered, a blamer, and arrogant. Humor never compensates for the absence of qualities such as great listener, encourager, empathetic, humble, takes responsibility for mistakes, and shares authority.

5. *Avoid letting fun-making rob task-effectiveness.* An overload of frivolity gives a group the same feeling as eating too much cotton candy. Blend fun with getting the work done, but don’t try to substitute it for engagement in meaningful ministries.

How Do We Create a Fun Climate?

Many laypersons and pastors experience the climate-setting aspect of their leadership roles as a challenge: they lack natural aptitude and fear mixing humor with serious goals! A few tips:

1. *Have fun at your own expense, not someone else’s.* But even here, don’t push self-denigration too far! Laugh at yourself in a self-effacing way, not in a self-derogatory way. Self-effacing is non-threatening to others and shows your humanness. Self-derogatory humor usually illustrates negative and self-centered personality traits.

2. *“Modeling” fun is effective.* A humorous item on your desk such as a cartoon, a quote, or a statue helps others feel it is OK to have non-serious thoughts.

3. *Add something funny to routine memos and announcements.* Humor in mundane communications erases stuffiness. People see that while you are serious about the church’s ministries you don’t feel pompous about your leadership role.

4. *Learn from funny things others do or say.* No two people have an identical sense of humor. Don’t be too quick to dismiss humor that is not your style—as long as it’s not offensive.

5. *Watch for ironic connections in daily life.* Comedians are not people to whom more funny things happen than to normal people. Comedians are people who recognize the humorous aspects of what happens to everyone.

The Bottom Line

Congregations engage in serious objectives. But humor is not inconsistent with seriousness! Think how often people tell funny stories at funerals.

Yes, effective congregations stay focused on high standards and effective delivery of quality ministries. But churches whose climates feel like an undertakers’ convention accomplish much less than churches whose emotional thermostat is set on fun. Lighten up!

The "Weekly Update" is available by e-mail when you send your address to sandy@detroitpresbytery.org or you can see it on the www.pbydetroit.org web site under Weekly Update.



[POD Web Site](#)

SPECIAL NOTICES

What's NEW on
www.PbyDetroit.org

F.Y.I./Announcements/Ecumenical News and Interfaith
[2008 Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration Nov 26.pdf](#)

F.Y.I./Announcements/Samaritan Center Events
[Samaritan Counseling Ctr Benefit Concert Nov 22.jpg](#)

F.Y.I./Announcements/Spirituality and Worship
[Birmingham First Worship Alive Workshop Nov 15.pdf](#)

Spiritual Directors Network Gathering will be on Wednesday, November 12 from noon to 1:30PM at Northminster Presbyterian Church. Bring your lunch if you'd like. Drinks provided. Ron Case will present the contents and experiences of San Francisco Theological Seminary's Diploma in the Art of Spiritual Direction three year training program. Anyone interested in learning more about programs in Christian spirituality are welcome.

Mark your calendars NOW: **June 21-23, 2009**--Sunday evening to Tuesday noon. **Synod-wide retreat with John Bell** of the Iona Community and author of numerous Wild Goose Worship materials--Columbiere Center in Clarkston, MI. Approximate cost \$160.00 for 2 nights, 4 meals, program and materials. Details soon to follow.

Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care meets on Tuesday, Nov. 11 at First Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, at 7:30 PM Fireside Room. Network with other denominations, social workers, educators, volunteers, foster parents and agency workers who are collaborating together to raise awareness on ways our churches can make a difference in the lives of our most vulnerable, voiceless and invisible members of our

The Presbytery of Detroit Weekly Update

October 24, 2008

Prayer of the Week:

Lord, make my soul
To mirror Thee,
Thyself alone
To shine in me,
That [people] may see
Thy love, Thy grace,
Nor note the glass
That shows Thy Face.

– Blanche Mary Kelly (1822 – 1890)

REMINDER OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Please send your Peacemaking Offering to the Presbytery office.

The Presbytery now has a subscription to The Parish Paper

Below is the copying rights for reproduction and web posting.

Our organization's purchase of photocopy rights for *The Parish Paper* INCLUDES

1. Permission to provide copies to our staff and the congregations within our constituency in any of the following ways: E-mail, Postal, newspaper, newsletter, meetings, training events, and our Website.
2. Permission for each congregation within our constituency to (a) photocopy or electronically distribute for local use as many copies as it needs, (b) post them on its Website, and (c) quote sentences and paragraphs.

Your congregation does NOT have permission (a) to delete the copyright notice on page 2;

(b) to re-write, paraphrase, or change the wording of sentences and paragraphs; or (c) to give ANY THIRD PARTY—other than your staff and constituents—permission to photocopy or reprint (in any quantity, no matter how small, whether for free distribution or for sale).

[Click here for The Parish Paper](#)



[PCUSA Web Site](#)

2008 CALENDAR

**October
MONTH OF MISSION**

25	Month of Mission Breakfast 9:00 am - Noon at Detroit, Jefferson Avenue
26- Nov 9	Katrina VII Hurricane Recovery Initiative
28	Presbytery Meeting at Rochester, University
30	Sterling Heights, Utica Presbyterian Church hosting Alpha 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

November

1	Waterford, Community Presbyterian Church Music Series The Calvarymen Quartet 7:00 pm
1	Bloomfield Hills, Kirk in the Hills presents "Understanding Your Teenager" 9:00 am - Noon
2	Daylight Savings Time Ends - Set clocks back 1 hour
2-8	Katrina VII Hurricane Recovery Initiative
4	Taize Worship at Dearborn, Littlefield
6	Synod of the Covenant presents God in the City A Vision for Urban Ministry at First Presbyterian Church Maumee, OH 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
6	Sterling Heights, Utica Presbyterian Church hosting Alpha 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm
7 - 9	Youth Mix at Camp Michindoh in Hillsdale, MI (south of Jackson)
13	Sterling Heights, Utica Presbyterian Church hosting Alpha 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm
15	Birmingham, First presents Worship Alive for creating and using visual arts and technology in worship 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
16-17	Ecumenical Sabbath Retreat - Journaling
18	Taize Worship at Bloomfield Hills, Kirk in the Hills
18-20	Is Heresy Possible? The office of Theology and Worship invite all clergy to a Pastor-Theologian consultation
20	Taize Worship at Troy, Northminster
20	Sterling Heights, Utica Presbyterian Church hosting Alpha 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm
22	Benefit concert for the Samaritan Counseling Center by Scott Wilkinson at Birmingham First United Methodist Church. Dessert at 7:00 pm and show at 8:00 pm
25	Presbytery Meeting at Detroit, Westminster
26	2008 Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration 7:30 pm at Detroit Westminster
27	26th Annual Thanksgiving Day Dinner at Detroit, Westminster click here for a list of

communities. Our goal: Each church to reach out to one child in one way or another. Contact Kate Thoresen for details at kthoresen7@gmail.com after Nov. 7.

**Ecumenical Sabbath Retreat--
November 16-17. 4:00PM to 4:00PM**

Spiritual practice is Journaling. come for the 24 hours or for the Monday only from 9:00-4:00. contact the Skyline Camp and Retreat Center office at 248-644-2043 or office@CampSkyline.org Pick up a postcard listing year's schedule at the next presbytery meeting.



**PRESBYTERIAN
DISASTER
ASSISTANCE**
OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE

And the Presbytery of Detroit's Hands on Mission Work Group are sponsoring

FLOOD RECOVERY INITIATIVE
[Iowa II Mission to Cedar Rapids](#)

Sunday to Thursday, November 9-13, 2008
(3 Work Days – November 10 - 12)

What does it mean to be a Commissioned Lay Pastor?
Who is eligible to be a Commissioned Lay Pastor?
Want to become a Commissioned Lay Pastor?
Then you should check out the information by clicking on the picture below!



November 7-8, 2008

Camp Michindoh
Hillsdale, MI 49242
(south of Jackson)

Special Note: Sleeping in beds NOT on the floor!!



Key Note Speaker:
The Rev. William Grimboll
Pastor, Shelter Island Presbyterian Church
Shelter Island, NY

For the past twenty years, Rev. Grimboll has been the pastor of the Shelter Island Presbyterian Church located on Shelter Island, New York and the former pastor of the "Island House" ministry program for children and youth. Besides his position for serving his flock on and around the island and presbytery, his other activities and work are in various gift items on Shelter Island and the local church organization.

[Get your Youth Mix Forms Here](#)

**2008
Men's Advent Communion Breakfast**
Saturday, December 13, 2008

8:00 am
First Presbyterian Church
26165 Farmington Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48334

Cost: \$10 Pay at the Door
RSVP (for head count) by December 9, 2008
On-line at <http://www.pbydetroit.org/mAdvent.htm>
Or call the Presbytery office 313-345-6550

Guest Speaker is the 1992 Pro Football Hall of Fame inductee and former Detroit Lions Cornerback Mr. Lem Barney.



[needs](#)

27 - 28	Presbytery Office Closed - Thanksgiving Break
December	
2	Taize Worship at Dearborn, Littlefield
4	Women in Ministry Spirituality meeting 9:30 am - 12:30 pm at the Presbytery Office
13	Men's Advent Communion Breakfast with Lem Barney, '67-'77 Detroit Lions Cornerback
14-15	Ecumenical Sabbath Retreat - Meditation with Artwork
16	Taize Worship at Bloomfield Hills, Kirk in the Hills
18	Taize Worship at Troy, Northminster
21	Waterford, Community Presbyterian Church Music Series All Choirs Christmas Concert 10:00 am
24 - 25	Presbytery Office Closed - Christmas Holiday
31	Presbytery Office Closed - New Year's Eve
January 2009	
1	Presbytery Office Closed - New Year's Day
6	Taize Worship at Dearborn, Littlefield
12-16	Interim Pastor Training Level 1, Level 2, and Spouse Track at Calvin Center in Hampton, GA
18	Martin Luther King Convocation
18-19	Ecumenical Sabbath Retreat - Praying with Music (FAMILY / YOUTH)
19	Presbytery Office Closed - Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday
20	Taize Worship at Bloomfield Hills, Kirk in the Hills
27	Presbytery Meeting - Installation of Moderator and Vice Moderator
28-31	2009 APCE Annual Conference will be held in San Antonio, TX
31	Mission Southeast Michigan: Leadership Training Day
February 2009	
3	Taize Worship at Dearborn, Littlefield
7	Waterford, Community Presbyterian Church Music Series Cats and the Fiddler 7:00 pm
14-21	Royal Oak First adult mission trip to Mexico Feb 14-21 2009.doc
15-16	Ecumenical Sabbath Retreat - Faith stories through Storytelling and Food
16-18	Pastors in Transition at St. Francis Retreat Center, DeWitt, MI
17	Taize Worship at Bloomfield Hills, Kirk in the Hills
24	Presbytery Meeting
27-Mar 1	Confirmation retreat Steps of Faith for youth at Camp Skyline
March 2009	
3	Taize Worship at Dearborn, Littlefield
7	Waterford, Community Presbyterian Church Music Series Mike Dempsey & Friends 7:00 pm
8	Daylight Savings Time begins - set clocks ahead one hour
8-10	Pastor's Retreat
13-14	Synod Assembly
15-16	Ecumenical Sabbath Retreat - Different Ways of Praying...Breath, Center, Lectio, Jesus Prayer
17	Taize Worship at Bloomfield Hills, Kirk in the Hills
22-28	Katrina Trip VIII to Pearlington, MS
April 2009	

		5	Waterford, Community Presbyterian Church Music Series All Choirs Palm Sunday Concert 10:00 am
		10	Presbytery Office Closed - Good Friday
		15-22	The Office of the General Assembly sponsoring Unity & Reformed Heritage Seminar in Geneva Switzerland
		17-18	Presbytery of Lake Huron conference about Christianity for the Rest of Us , with Diane <i>Butler Bass</i>
		18	Waterford, Community Presbyterian Church Music Series Thirteen:8 7:00 pm
		19-20	Ecumenical Sabbath Retreat - Prayer Walk
		21	Taize Worship at Bloomfield Hills, Kirk in the Hills
		28	Presbytery Meeting
		May 2009	
		2	Follow-up to the Mission Southeast Michigan Leadership Training Day
		5-19	Pilgrimage to the Holy Land sponsored by the Middle East Work Group of the Social Justice and Peacemaking Ministry Team click here for an application in word and here for a pdf version
		16	Waterford, Community Presbyterian Church Music Series Shoreline Sound 7:00 pm
		17-18	Ecumenical Sabbath Retreat - Bringing the Sabbath Home
		19	Taize Worship at Bloomfield Hills, Kirk in the Hills
		25	Presbytery Office Closed - Memorial Day
		June 2009	
		16	Taize Worship at Bloomfield Hills, Kirk in the Hills
		23	Presbytery Meeting
		July 2009	
		3	Presbytery Office Closed - Independence Day
		August 2009	
		25	Presbytery Meeting
		September 2009	
		7	Presbytery Office Closed - Labor Day
		28-29	Pastors in Transition at St. Francis Retreat Center, DeWitt, MI
		October 2009 MONTH OF MISSION	
		27	Presbytery Meeting
		31	Month of Mission Breakfast
		November 2009	
		1	Daylight Savings Time ends - set clocks back one hour
		6-7	Synod Assembly
		13-15	Youth Mix
		24	Presbytery Meeting
		26-27	Presbytery Office Closed - Thanksgiving Holiday
		December 2009	
		24-25	Presbytery Office Closed - Christmas Holiday
		31	Presbytery Office Closed - New Years Eve