

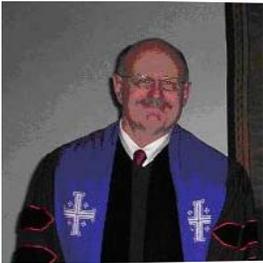


# The Grapevine

CONNECTING THE CONGREGATIONS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF DETROIT

January 2009

## “The Three Circles of the Missional Church”



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

Will Mancini  
captures the

essence of the church that reaches the culture around it. In his book [Church Unique: How Missional Leaders Cast Vision, Capture Culture, and Create Movement](#) (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), he introduces the three intersecting circles of churches which want to find their calling to reach out to their neighbors (83-99).

The first circle is the local predicament. What are the specific challenges of your community? These challenges are social, economic, political, ethnic, environmental, and religious? What is the arena God wants to restore among the concerns of the community? Mancini says one church may be near a school, another a hospital, another a business district. What change might the church offer, or community events provide, that meet these deepest needs?

The second circle is the collective potential of your church members. There are various questions to ask that help identify what gifts the congregation can offer the community. What is the most significant ministry in our church? What are the spiritual gifts and talents of the members? What is the atmosphere of the congregation when they gather? What are the common aspects of training, education, and occupational history of the congregation?

The third circle is the “apostolic

esprit.” Mancini describes esprit as the mindset that a congregation is “sent” into its community to serve Jesus Christ. This most important question for this circle is What particular focus most energizes and animates our leadership? Mancini cites Andrew Wyeth. Wyeth, says Mancini, did not look for fresh things to paint; rather he looked for fresh meaning in the familiar things around him. Our job is to look at the familiar around us, see what we come to believe “breaks the heart of God,” and seek as a congregation to make it right.

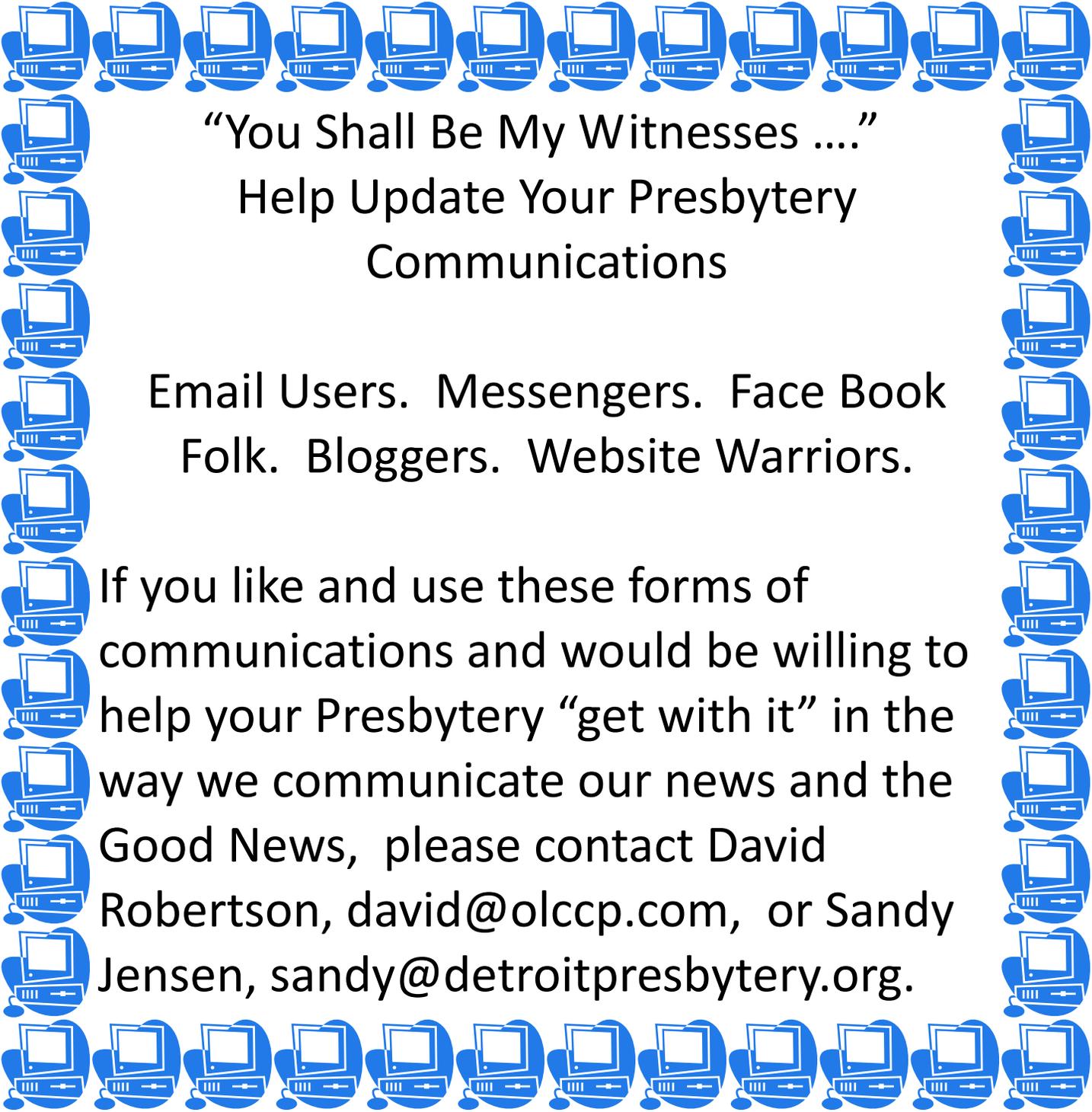
Is it a surprise there are three circles in Mancini’s vision of serving Christ in the world. In our baptism, we hear that we have been claimed by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God the creator has designed this world and longs to see the Garden of Eden restored in our morality and ethic, love and justice. God the Son gave himself for this world, “poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” The Holy Spirit gives us gifts to serve, creates in us a sense of longing for the vision of the right, and sends us to serve with Christ’s power and help.

I served a church as pastor in a downtown church in a metropolitan area. Though the church wanted to grow, most of the members admitted they came for two reasons, to remember their parents who worshiped there, or to see their friends, whose parents were friends. They wanted to grow in membership. But visitors found it hard to break into their conversations because these folks wanted to see each other, and it was the only time of the week. But a small cadre of members began studying Scripture and asking, “Who is our neighbor?” And these

folks began asking how they could serve the elementary school next door and the people who came downtown every day for work. As pastor, I served as a leader in the Boy Scouts, YMCA, and Rotary Club. Through these engagements, I became aware of the needs of the community and began making them known. Soon partnerships emerged with Christmas in April, the Rotary Club, the business community and the elementary school. The day the principal of the elementary school knocked on my door to ask if we had art rooms and if could they use them, I knew we had made a difference. The Christmas where over 100 members of the Chamber of Commerce business community dropped off children’s gifts for the orphanage in our community, and we dedicated them for God, I knew we had lifted the light of Christ, the light of the one who makes himself known in the needs of others.

Mancini’s book goes much deeper than I could in these few short paragraphs. He longs to help congregations become missional, pastoral and prophetic in their community. He sees mission as a mandate to the church, the values of Christ for the world as the motive, and strategy as a map to reach the world for Jesus Christ (Mancini, 153).

Who is God calling us to serve in our community? What gifts does God long to give us in ourselves and the others God calls along side of us? And what passion does the Holy Spirit put on our heart? These are the three intersecting circles God brings together in our lives.



“You Shall Be My Witnesses ....”  
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# THE PARISH PAPER

## IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

Coeditors: Herb Miller, Lyle Schaller, Cynthia Woolever - [www.TheParishPaper.com](http://www.TheParishPaper.com)

March 2009 - Volume 17, Number 3

Cynthia Woolever

### Going into all the World: Church Website Basics

Does your congregation need an electronic presence? Several trends suggest the answer:

- ◆ An estimated 238 million people in the U.S. use the Internet, more than double the number in 2000.

- ◆ Of the more than 70 percent of people in the U.S. who use the Internet, younger adults, who learned the skill in childhood, are especially likely to look for a church *first* on the Internet. For many younger people, if your church isn't "there" on the Internet, it doesn't exist.

- ◆ About one in seven Americans move each year. A large proportion of those relocaters are age eighteen to forty-four young adults. These young newcomers more often look for services, schools, and churches in their new community on the Internet than in the *Yellow Pages*. Some churches estimate that 90 percent of their first-time worshipers visit their church's Website *before* they arrive in person.

- ◆ At least 44 percent of Americans have switched denominational affiliation as adults. Switchers and unaffiliated seekers browsing for churches online ask, "Will I feel comfortable there?" If the answer to that question seems unclear, they mouse click to other options.

- ◆ Currently, 45 percent of U.S. congregations have a Website.

In addition to the *Yellow Page* presence they needed in 1970, churches also need an Internet presence today.

**But do people really "Google" for a church?** One Internet-savvy church member tracked Internet searches for congregations in his city. He learned that approximately one out of every seven people search the Internet for a local church each year.

To determine how many people in your city or town Google for a church, divide its population by seven. That is the number of Internet searches that could potentially lead visitors to your church doors this year.

- ◆ For Albuquerque, New Mexico—with a population of almost one-half million people—that calculation yields 64,000 Internet searches for local churches per year.

- ◆ For Mentor, Ohio—a smaller city of about 50,000 people—that statistic translates to more than 7,000 Internet searches for local churches this year.

To increase your chances of connecting with that one in seven people, advertise your church's Website address on all printed materials, newspaper and *Yellow Page* ads, and outdoor signage.

**What should churches put on their Websites?** One expert sums up the biggest Website mistake this way: "We designed our site to meet our organization's needs rather than our visitors' needs."

*Who visits a church Website and what are their needs?* Church Websites get three types of visitors: (1) people looking for a church who have never attended your services, (2) people in your local community, and (3) your congregation's regular attendees.

Each visitor-type needs different information.

**What information is essential for church seekers?** Under a button or link labeled *For Visitors*, organize information such as the following:



*Where is the church?* Give the exact street address, city, and zip code. Offer helpful hints about your church's location, such as "in the Hyde Park neighborhood"... "across the street from Lincoln Park"... "one block east of Main Street." Give directions to the church from the east, west, north, and south. Include traffic patterns (one-way or closed streets), nearby public transportation, and a Google or Yahoo map link.

*What should I know about the worship services?* List the times. Briefly describe each service. Is informal dress OK? Is the service designed for families with young children? Is it a Latin Mass? What is the music like? What languages are used?

*Where do I park and enter the building for worship?* Which doors are handicapped accessible?

*What is available for my children?* Include directions to the nursery and children's classrooms.

*What other questions do visitors frequently ask?* What happens during the service? What is the passing of the peace? How does the congregation observe communion? What is the church office's telephone number if I have other questions?

**What information is essential for people in the community?** A Website offers an effective way to tell parents about your excellent daycare and/or preschool ministries. Postings about enrollment periods, opportunities for visiting the school, open houses, staff profiles, and downloadable forms supply a welcome mat.

Other Website visitors are people who want to learn whether they can use your building (Boy Scout Troops, support groups, weddings). In your *Frequently Asked Questions* section, answer questions such as, "Can I get married in the church, even though I'm not a member?"

Even if you decide not to post all of your policies regarding weddings, meetings, or other events, provide contact information for the staff person who can answer these inquiries.

**What information is essential for members and regular attendees?** Consider an online newsletter, a church calendar, sermon transcripts, Podcasts of services, event registration, book recommendations or online church library card catalog, volunteer needs, online giving, online member directory (viewed on a secure link only), Bible discussions, or daily prayers.

### **The Top Ten Church Website Mistakes**

1. Incomplete church address. Include your city, state, and zip code on the Website's front page. A home page with only "First Baptist Church" could be anywhere in the U.S.

2. An unusual and difficult-to-remember Website address. A [www.FirstPresbyterianTulsa.org](http://www.FirstPresbyterianTulsa.org) address is far better than a [www.fpctok.org](http://www.fpctok.org) address.

3. No contact information for a human being. Provide a staff name and telephone number.

4. No information about the church's denomination or affiliation. If people have to guess, they often look elsewhere for a church!

5. Outdated information and small print. Poorly maintained church calendars and old content give a boarded-up windows impression.

6. Jargon or insider abbreviations. One church lists WBSAM. Only an insider knows the translation—Women's Bible Study on a weekday-morning.

7. No outside-the-building information, such as where to park, or enter the building for worship, or find handicapped access.

8. No inside-the-building information, such as nursery location, pre-school childcare, or a separate children's worship during services.

9. Inappropriate content. Confidential information such as prayer lists with members' names, illnesses, and surgeries; children's photos without their parent's permission (whether or not they are identified); new members' photos without prior consent; staff photos that detract from their professional image; and home telephone numbers.

10. E-mail addresses. "Spiders" or Web crawler computer programs read through Web page content looking for E-mail addresses. These programs then send ads and other SPAM that floods inboxes. Protect your staff and volunteers by creating a user link for sending E-mails.

**Your congregation's Website ministry is important, but not its only important ministry.** Websites cannot replace all other forms of communication. People without Internet access are also partners in your church's mission, so don't exclude them from your communication.

### **How can we evaluate our Website's effectiveness?**

1. Consult expert resources, such as the following:  
[www.congregationalresources.org](http://www.congregationalresources.org)  
*Web-Empower Your Church: Unleashing the Power of Internet Ministry* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006) by Mark M. Stephenson

2. Meet with a group of eight to ten young adults who began attending your church within the last six months. Ask each of them to name one thing "I wish I had known when I was considering a visit to this congregation."

3. Does your Website information touch the head, heart, and body? Does it give me the facts I need (head)? Does it tell me the church's mission or vision (heart)? Does it tell me what I can do to answer God's call (body)?

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



[POD Web Site](#)

What's NEW on [www.PbyDetroit.org](http://www.PbyDetroit.org)

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**Leadership Training that will change your congregation.**



What is different? The conference is designed for teams to come together to work and leave with a plan. Teams will be asked to come back May 2 to share what they accomplished and what they learned.

What is the same? Everyone will enjoy worship; each workshop leader will share what he or she is doing so the whole group will hear "the big picture."

What are the topics?  
 Design a strategy to build community in your church so visitors can find a place to plug in.  
 Make plans to share your good news with the community around your church.  
 Design Education in the church that builds a heart for serving others.  
 Consider how you can prepare and resource yourself in your vocation to serve Christ.  
 Look for what God is doing in your community and plan an outreach that serves.  
 Empower officers to lead the church into mission.

All the workshops will be led by

**The Presbytery of Detroit Weekly Update**

**January 23, 2009**

**Prayer of the Week:**

Creator God,  
 Give us a heart for simple things:  
 love and laughter,  
 bread and wine,  
 tales and dreams.  
 Fill our lives  
 with green and growing hope;  
 make us a people of justice  
 whose song is Alleluia  
 and whose name breathes love.

– a South African "Vision of Justice"

Because you have touched her life in some special way,  
 We are requesting your company

At a retirement celebration

**"The Re-Direction Of The Life Of**

**The Rev. Dr. Ellen Acton"**

**Sunday, January 25, 2009**

Southfield Presbyterian Church  
 21575 West Ten Mile Road  
 (Between Evergreen and Lasher)  
 Southfield, Michigan 48075  
 (248) 356-1430

Time: 3:00PM-6:00PM

Fellowship Hall

We want very much for you to join in, and help us, in our celebration of the Re-Direction of Dr. Acton as she begins living and fulfilling her higher aspirations, dreams and goals.

Our hope is that you will be there to share special moments with us  
 On this Sunday afternoon at a reception with a small program where we will celebrate the retirement of our pastor, leader and friend!!!!  
 If you can't make it, please offer a prayer for Dr. "A".  
 Please RSVP to Shirley Jolly at 248-443-5340 (before Friday Jan 23, 2009)  
 The Session and Congregation of the Southfield Presbyterian Church.



[PCUSA Web Site](#)

January 2009	
27	<b>Presbytery Meeting at Birmingham, First-Installation of Moderator and Vice Moderator</b>
28-31	<a href="#">2009 APCE Annual Conference</a> will be held in San Antonio, TX
31	Presbytery-wide Leadership Training Day <a href="#">Mission Southeastern Michigan</a> at Dearborn, First 8:30 am - 4:00 pm. To register on-line <a href="#">click here</a>
31	Royal Oak, Starr is hosting a Coffeehouse Concert to benefit the Warming Shelter 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm at the church 1717 W Thirteen Mile Rd, Royal Oak
February 2009	
3	<a href="#">Taize Worship</a> at Dearborn, Littlefield
7	Waterford, Community Presbyterian Church Music Series <a href="#">Cats and the Fiddler</a> 7:00 pm
14-21	Royal Oak First <a href="#">adult mission trip to Mexico</a> Feb 14-21 2009.doc
15-16	Ecumenical Sabbath Retreat - <a href="#">Faith stories through Storytelling and Food</a>
16-18	Pastors in Transition at St. Francis Retreat Center, DeWitt, MI
17	<a href="#">Taize Worship</a> at Bloomfield Hills, Kirk in the Hills
21	<a href="#">Mission Workshop</a> presented by Hands-On Mission to be held at Redford, St. James
24	<b>Presbytery Meeting at Howell, First</b>
24	<b>Statistical Report Due the Deadline is Midnight</b>
27- Mar 1	Confirmation retreat <a href="#">Steps of Faith</a> for youth at Camp Skyline
March 2009	
3	<a href="#">Taize Worship</a> at Dearborn, Littlefield
7	Waterford, Community Presbyterian Church Music Series <a href="#">Mike Dempsey &amp; Friends</a> 7:00 pm
8	<b>Daylight Savings Time begins</b> - set clocks ahead one hour
8	<a href="#">Celebrate the Gifts of Women</a> Sunday and International Women's Day
8-10	Pastor's Retreat
13-14	Synod Assembly
15-16	Ecumenical Sabbath Retreat - <a href="#">Different Ways of Praying...Breath, Center, Lectio, Jesus Prayer</a>
17	<a href="#">Taize Worship</a> at Bloomfield Hills, Kirk in the Hills
21-29	<a href="#">Katrina Trip VIII to Pearlinton, MS</a>
27-28	<a href="#">Hands on Mission World Medical Relief</a>
28	Howell Conference and Nature Center <a href="#">Discover &amp; Live Your Calling Retreat</a> 9:30 am - 4:30 pm
April 2009	
5	Waterford, Community Presbyterian Church Music Series <a href="#">All Choirs Palm Sunday Concert</a> 10:00 am
10	<b>Presbytery Office Closed - Good Friday</b>
15-22	The Office of the General Assembly sponsoring <a href="#">Unity &amp; Reformed Heritage Seminar</a> in Geneva Switzerland
17-18	Presbytery of Lake Huron conference about <a href="#">Christianity for the Rest of Us</a> with Diane Butler Bass

practitioners who will share their story and help you plan. The Keynoter, The Rev. Dr. Jack Stewart led a congregation in downtown Grand Rapids for 15 years, finished his PhD in American History at U Mich., and then taught at Princeton Seminary for 10 years as professor of mission and evangelism.

[Click here to Register on-line for the Leadership Training](#)

The Annual Statistical Report Forms are now available on line and all information must be submitted no later than midnight Tuesday, February 24, 2009.

Are You Sensing a Call to Ministry?  
Would you like to explore this feeling further?

ETS is hosting a Discernment Retreat and Seminary Experience Night on January 27, 2009, from 6-9pm. Led by Sister Rosemarie Kieffer, this retreat is designed to help you understand the nature of your personal calling and what it might mean for your future direction in ministry. At the end of the retreat you will be able to observe select classes in session on that evening to give you a sense of seminary life here at ETS. Registration is \$10.00 in advance, and \$12.00 at the door. Sign up now for an evening that is sure to challenge, enlighten, and help you decide your next step in ministry preparation.

For further information and to register for this exciting evening, contact Dr. Jean Derricotte-Murphy, Director of Admissions and Recruitment at 313-831-5200, ext. 207, or [jderricottemurphy@etseminary.edu](mailto:jderricottemurphy@etseminary.edu).

Come and bring a friend! We would love to see you there!

18	Waterford, Community Presbyterian Church Music Series <a href="#">Thirteen:8</a> 7:00 pm
19-20	Ecumenical Sabbath Retreat - <a href="#">Prayer Walk</a>
20-21	Healthy Congregations meet in DeWitt
21	<a href="#">Taize Worship</a> at Bloomfield Hills, Kirk in the Hills
25	<a href="#">Hands on Mission Rebuilding Detroit Together</a>
27- May 1	<a href="#">Iowa III Mission trip to Cedar Rapids, IA</a>
28	<b>Presbytery Meeting at Detroit, Westminster</b>
29	Pittsburgh Theological Seminary invites all PNC's to their campus for a Placement Fair 10:00 am-3:00 pm if interested call 412-441-3304 x2146 for a reservation
<b>May 2009</b>	
2	Follow-up to the Mission Southeast Michigan Leadership Training Day
2	PWPD Annual Women's Retreat with Keynoter Joan Gray at Grosse Pointe Memorial PC
5-19	<a href="#">Pilgrimage to the Holy Land</a> sponsored by the <a href="#">Middle East Work Group</a> of the Social Justice and Peacemaking Ministry Team click <a href="#">here</a> for an application in word and <a href="#">here</a> for a pdf version
16	Waterford, Community Presbyterian Church Music Series <a href="#">Shoreline Sound</a> 7:00 pm
16	<a href="#">Hands on Mission Greening Detroit</a>
17-18	Ecumenical Sabbath Retreat - <a href="#">Bringing the Sabbath Home</a>
19	<a href="#">Taize Worship</a> at Bloomfield Hills, Kirk in the Hills
23	Hands on Mission Greening Detroit day 2
25	<b>Presbytery Office Closed - Memorial Day</b>
<b>June 2009</b>	
11-13	The <a href="#">Big Tent</a> , an unprecedented gathering of Presbyterians for ten national conferences and convocations under one roof, will take place in Atlanta, Georgia
15-18	<a href="#">Hands on Mission Festivals of Health</a>
16	<a href="#">Taize Worship</a> at Bloomfield Hills, Kirk in the Hills
16-20	<a href="#">Hands on Mission Blitz Build 2009</a>
23	<b>Presbytery Meeting at Detroit, Jefferson Avenue</b>
28- July 3	Covenant Gathering at Camp Michindoh, Hillsdale, MI
<b>July 2009</b>	
3	<b>Presbytery Office Closed - Independence Day</b>
<b>August 2009</b>	
8	<a href="#">Hands on Mission work day at Barnabas</a>
25	<b>Presbytery Meeting at Shelby Twp., St. Thomas</b>
<b>September 2009</b>	
7	<b>Presbytery Office Closed - Labor Day</b>
13-17	<a href="#">Iowa IV Mission Trip to Cedar Rapids, IA</a>
28-29	Pastors in Transition at St. Francis Retreat Center, DeWitt, MI
<b>October 2009 MONTH OF MISSION</b>	
27	<b>Presbytery Meeting at Port Huron, First</b>
31	Month of Mission Breakfast
<b>November 2009</b>	
1	<b>Daylight Savings Time ends</b> - set clocks back one hour
1-8	<a href="#">Katrina IX Mission Trip to Pearlinton, MS</a>
6-7	Synod Assembly
13-15	Youth Mix
24	<b>Presbytery Meeting at Waterford, Community</b>
26-27	<b>Presbytery Office Closed - Thanksgiving Holiday</b>
<b>December 2009</b>	
24-25	<b>Presbytery Office Closed - Christmas Holiday</b>
31	<b>Presbytery Office Closed - New Years Eve</b>