

One in the Spirit

A monthly email from Linda Valentine strengthening community between the General Assembly Mission Council and Middle Governing Bodies

What's coming up?



A boy looks out from his tent home following the earthquake. Many survivors are living in tents in this park in Petionville, Haiti. Photo by Paul Jeffrev. ACT Alliance.

Haiti Relief and Recovery - By June, response by Presbyterians to the recovery efforts in Haiti passed \$10 million. \$4 million has already been committed to relief and recovery. We continue to assess needs and venues for long term recovery - including the possibility to begin hosting teams of mission volunteers by the end of the year. We are working carefully with partners to determine host sites where there is real need, a capacity for visitors and a context that will provide safe and meaningful experiences for participants. To learn more, visit the [Presbyterian Disaster Assistance website](#). We are grateful for the commitment and generosity of so many Presbyterians!



Chaplain Jim Edwards plays the guitar

Remember our Presbyterian military chaplains on July 4 - As we approach the annual observance of Independence Day on July 4 - when we will recognize the service of our military chaplains during opening worship at the [219th General Assembly \(2010\)](#) - may it be for us Presbyterians not only a special time to remember the freedoms

that we enjoy, but also to pray for those among us who serve faithfully as [military chaplains](#), called to embody the hope of Jesus Christ in some of the world's most perilous places. Through our prayers and our [gifts](#), together we can make a difference to those whose ministry touches so many.



[pcusa.org](#) gets an extreme makeover - A complete overhaul of the denomination's web presence has resulted in a new look, feel and functionality for the site, which will have its formal premiere on Saturday, July 3, during the General Assembly Mission Council's presentation at the 219th General Assembly (2010). The fresh new design is coupled with a new content management system, which serves up content in more dynamic and flexible pages that are geared to help users quickly find relevant and helpful information. New tools to aid conversation around each story have also been incorporated, offering the site as a place to share ideas about ministry and mission as well as to find and share resources to inspire and equip congregations for the church's work.

The home page is designed to serve as a gateway to the church, with stories of Presbyterians and our love for the church, an introduction to the PC(USA) for first-time visitors, helpful links to popular pages from all of the national offices, and new tools for finding events, news and information, resources, and products available for purchase in the church store. Because it's been ten years since the denomination's last major web design project, we hope that you will plan to log on after July 3 for the ultimate Presbyterian web experience!



Peruvian children

Mutual Mission in Peru. “Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the Peru Mission Network (PMN) is a group of Presbyterian (U.S.A.) churches, presbyteries, and individuals that fosters and coordinates mutual ministry in partnership,” reads PMN’s mission statement. Members are involved in evangelism (Vacation Bible School and other programs) and are concerned about medical and social justice issues.

PMN will meet October 7-9 at [Sharon Presbyterian Church](#) in Charlotte, North Carolina. Members will hear from a Peru pastor, several Peru mission co-workers, and Sherron George, missiologist and author. For information on the conference, contact [Karen Wilson](#) or [Maria Arroyo](#). PMN is one of more than 30 mission networks organized around particular countries, regions and global issues. Get connected with a mission network by first visiting the [Mission Networks website](#), which will start you on your way to being equipped and inspired in partnership with others who share a common international mission focus.



Excitement is building for [Presbyterian Youth Triennium 2010](#).

Although statistics generated by the Religious Conference Management Association suggested that our numbers would be at an all-time low due to the economic downturn, more than 4,700 Presbyterian youth will gather this summer *For Such A Time As This*, to the delight of event organizer, Gina Yeager-Buckley. Discover why the energy is higher than ever for Triennium on their [Facebook](#) or [twitter](#) pages. Find out what is new at Triennium, for example the [Ambassadors](#), a mentor ministry where senior adults and young people will experience and share faith together at Presbyterian Youth Triennium 2010.



The newly revised [We Believe: God’s Word for God’s People](#) is

receiving overwhelmingly favorable responses from around the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). *We Believe* sales have risen 18 percent in the past year and [Congregational Ministries Publishing](#) (CMP) is grateful for feedback from congregations that have guided them in making changes to better suit educational needs. [Learn about Multiage](#), a new addition to the *We Believe* curriculum in response to the needs of the smaller church school. Also discover CMP's highly anticipated new adult studies, brand new this fall: [Being Reformed: Faith Seeking Understanding](#). Visit the [Being Reformed Facebook page](#) and [order your church curriculum](#) for the fall now.



The "God's Mission Matters" [podcasts and webinars](#) from [Presbyterian World Mission](#) inspire, equip and connect Presbyterians through the opportunity to hear stories and take part in a live, interactive conversation about how to engage more faithfully and effectively in God's mission. Global partners, mission workers, short-term mission leaders and mission participants are just some of the storytellers and panelists. The podcast is taken to a deeper level during monthly Webinars. Visit the [Mission Crossroads website](#) to hear the current podcast or to register for the next webinar in August. Go deeper into mission issues, ask questions and share your mission experiences.

** Please note that publication of One in the Spirit will be on hiatus for the month of July.*

Lives Transformed

Stories of how an individual's life has been impacted by the programs, initiatives and activities of the General Assembly Mission Council

Marianne Rhebergen

Marianne Rhebergen has seen many churches that have little or no sense of what they are called to be, and a host of discouraged and even dysfunctional pastors serving them.



The Rev. Marianne Rhebergen

"So many are living out of old models," she said, "models that worked in the middle of

the 20th century. Today, there is a desperate need for our congregations to ‘seek the welfare of the city in which they have been planted,’ to move outside their doors into God’s world.”

That’s one of the reasons why Rhebergen, then interim executive presbyter for Lehigh Presbytery, became a member of the Core Cluster of the [Re-Forming Ministry](#) program in 2004.

The initiative seemed to focus on issues about which she is passionate - such as the renewal of congregations and the reforming of ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Re-Forming Ministry, an initiative of the General Assembly Mission Council’s [Office of Theology & Worship](#) funded through the Lilly Endowment, has brought together pastors, governing body leaders and professors in the theological disciplines in clusters over multi-year periods to explore new ways of thinking and living the Christian faith together.

“I believed then, and still do, that these three groups - pastors, governing body leaders and professors - need to be in conversation,” said Rhebergen, a PC(USA) pastor since 1979. “As a church, there is an urgent need to train and shape pastoral leaders for a new, missional era in American Christianity. It will not happen unless there is serious, sustained conversation between these three groups of leaders.”

Rhebergen said the program experience has made her more familiar with important theological “voices” throughout the history of the church, from the early church fathers to contemporary missional theologians.

“I have read and discussed more theology through this program,” she said, “and it has led me to be more intentional about reading Scripture devotionally.”

“Also I have certainly been more intentional in raising questions about missional vocation with colleagues and in my own life,” Rhebergen said, “whether while serving as an executive presbyter or as a pastor.” All of this has sharpened the focus of her teaching and leadership in the church, she said.

On a broader scale, Rhebergen said Re-Forming Ministry has brought to the forefront key questions congregations and pastors need to ask, such as “What is God calling you to be and do, at this time and in this place?” and “What is God up to in the world around you, and in the life of your congregation and presbytery?”

“We need to be asking these questions in all aspects of our life as the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

“Re-Forming Ministry has impacted the way I think about what local congregations are called to be and do, and therefore what the formation of pastoral leaders needs to look like,” she said.

Rhebergen’s experience underscores the program’s significant contributions toward [Growing Christ’s Church Deep and Wide](#) in the area of discipleship, according to the Rev. Barry Ensign-George, associate for Theology for the General Assembly Mission Council and program director for Re-Forming Ministry,

“Marianne combines theological expertise with deep love for the church,” Ensign-George said. “Not only did her perspective on congregations and presbyteries help to shape the work of her Re-Forming Ministry group, the life of the group also contributed to Marianne’s insight into who the church is both across time and today.

“Pastors, governing body leaders, teachers of the faith, elders and deacons, church members - we all need such communities of theological friendship with whom we can engage faith and world with real traction.”

The Rev. Marianne Rhebergen, Ph.D., is currently serving as the Transitional Presbyter for the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse, Synod of the Northeast.



General Assembly Mission Council

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