

The Companion

June - July - August 2013

Vacation Bible School June 24 -28; Registration Full

One-week VBS -- a week of wonderful Bible stories, crafts, songs, snacks and friends. This year's VBS theme is "Beach Trek With Jesus".

Karen Schmitt is the "chief cook and bottle washer" and **Tammy Foster** is the story teller *extraordinaire*.



Karen Schmitt

VBS is five mornings from **Monday, June 24 through Friday, June 28, 8:45 to 11:30.**

We start each morning with much singing and a prayer from **Pastor Bob** and then enter into our theme Bible story of the day told by Tammy Foster; Tammy totally involves the children in what becomes a children's play every



Tammy Foster
Story Teller

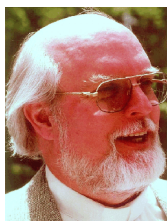
morning. Then the kids go to their separate classes. As part of their VBS experience, each child and adult makes a Reformed Church VBS T-shirt. The children also make a VBS-Songs CD.

Cost? \$15 donation per child (financial assistance is available). This defrays about half the cost of supplies. We also ask that for each child attending you bring a donation of a bottle of juice (64oz.) and a box of cookies or crackers to share for snack time.

Registration is FULL.

Help will be needed the next two Sundays after church to set up the church facilities for the grand event. So please plan to stay, congregants, to give us a few minutes during coffee hour.

There will be a meeting of the VBS staff Friday, June 14, at 10:45. Questions? Call **Karen Schmitt** at 462-6968.



Dear Church Family and Friends,

I know the summer *Companion* is two weeks late, but I wanted the consistory elections to be in this issue as well as the latest about the General Synod starting June 20 in Central College in Pella, Iowa (turn over).

I encourage you to read the report on two of the most important issues to be deliberated at GS: baptism and homosexuality. By the time the next issue of the *Companion* appears in September you should be able to read about the actions GS has taken in both regards.

Both issues are the result of strong cultural shifts in the US: more and more people identifying themselves as religiously unaffiliated and more and more saying they are comfortable with same-gender marriages and sexual relations. Be sure to look for the September *Companion* to see where these discussions go.

Have a most restful and invigorating summer. I know I'll try. Grace and Peace,

Pastor Bob

Elections Shape 2013-2014 Consistory

This year the congregation said *auf wiedersehen* (meaning we plan to see you again!) to three members of consistory. Leaving consistory this year (due to the RCA's requirement that consistory members take at least a year off after four or five years of service) were deacon **Brendan Boyce**, elder **Betty Bakker** and, finally, elder and consistory **Vice President, Jim Haggett**. Consistory member terms are usually for two years.

At the congregational election of consistory after worship June 9, two of these vacancies were filled by spouses who themselves had to go off of consistory four years ago for the same break. At that election, **Bill Bakker** was returned as was **Meg Boyce** to positions they left in 2009. Also at that election, two consistory members finishing up their first term of two years, were re-elected: deacons **Dick Moysey** and **Amelia Seyssel-Parks**.



Deborah Wiands

This year **Deborah Wiands** was elected to fill the empty deacon slot. This is her first election to the consistory. Deborah joined our fellowship in 2011. Be sure to welcome Deborah aboard during a coffee hour after church.

Consistory 2013-2014

Elders

William Bakker
Meg Boyce
Mary Linge
Barbara Markell
Nancy Perley
Linda Sandberg

Deacons

Laura Lokey
Richard Moysey
Debbie Sala
Amelia Seyssel-Parks
Chip Simon
Debbie Wiands

FULL

Strawberry Festival

Sat., June 15, 6:30

June RCA General Synod to Discuss New Baptism Liturgies and a "Way Forward" on Homosexuality

The next General Synod of the RCA will take place June 20-25 on the campus of Central College in Pella, Iowa. Here is the context of two of the issues that will be discussed.

Baptism

Responding to the post-Christian missional context of the RCA, General Synod



delegates will decide whether to adopt three new orders celebrating the sacrament of baptism.

"In the Christianized society of medieval Europe, infant baptism was virtually universal and adult baptism was rare. The evangelization of post-Christian North America presents a very different situation," the Commission on Christian Worship reports.

In adjusting to a missional context where more adults are being converted to the Christian faith, being baptized, and reaffirming their faith, the commission is presenting three baptismal liturgies that give greater emphasis to:

1. biblical language and metaphors for baptism,
2. clearer language concerning the missional implications of baptism, and
3. encouragement of the use of symbols that tell the story of redemption.

One of the proposed liturgies combines all the pastoral situations that might come together in a service—baptism of youth, adults, and children, plus occasions of profession of faith and reaffirmation of faith—and assumes adult baptism to be as normative as infant baptism.

Further, for those baptized as children who do not come to faith until later in their lives and seek a meaningful way to express their new life in Christ, "re-baptism" sometimes is requested, presenting a significant challenge to pastors and boards of elders.

"The proposed liturgy invites the convert into a rich and meaningful remembrance of their baptism (which calls them to faith), while affording them the opportunity to publicly profess the faith they now have," the commission reports. "They are

invited to touch the water at the font, to kneel and be signed with the cross, and to be prayed for by name by the minister. This enables the candidate to meaningfully express the 'new thing' that has happened, while at the same time anchoring it in their baptism."

While acknowledging more frequent adult baptisms, the report says infant baptism "is not a vestige of dying Christendom...As a Reformed and missional church the RCA joyfully hears God's call to bring our children to Jesus (Matthew 19:14, Mark 10:14) as surely as we invite our neighbors to the great feast God is preparing for all people (Luke 14:15-24). The proposed liturgy shows the missional seamlessness of God's invitation to all people in baptism—to believers, to their children, and to their neighbors."

Homosexuality

A task force was created last year to tackle a divisive issue, one that has ripped apart many congregations and denominations – the issue of the homosexuality of clergy (the ordination to ministry of practicing gay and lesbian persons) and in marriage solemnization (same-gender weddings). The task force's assignment was to find a way forward for the RCA given continued disagreement about homosexuality. That task force comes to this year's General Synod claiming to have found "remarkable unity."

Whether this report will be accepted and followed by the GS is the question remaining unanswered. By month's end we will know.

"In our report to synod, we talk about what occurred for us as a group and personally, individually, as a result of our meeting together," says task force facilitator **David VanNingen**. The task force included eight people, each appointed by one of the RCA's regional synods. "The group was highly respectful, and that respect came from a desire to honor God and to reflect God's grace."

The "Way Forward" Task Force was initiated by the passage of R-51 (later renumbered R-28) at General Synod 2012. The task force is reporting back to General Synod this year with three recommendations, calling for:

- ~ The Commission on Church Order to clarify the authority and scope of General Synod statements.
- ~ A working group to create a process for grace-filled conversation in each classis about related RCA polity—including the possibility and implications of changes to the polity—and to allow congregations and ministers to re-covenant to or separate from the RCA at the end of the process.

~ The General Synod Council to develop resources to facilitate grace-filled conversations about various understandings in the RCA regarding sexual orientation and gender identity.

"I take our recommendations very seriously and feel that the recommendations are indeed a way forward for our denomination," VanNingen says. "But even more than that, if General Synod would come away from a

discussion with the sense of the Holy Spirit's presence, and the unity and the love of the Holy Spirit, even inside of difference of opinion on homosexuality, I think we will have greatly honored the task put before us, irrespective of the action on the recommendations themselves."

Birthdays and Anniversaries

JUNE

BIRTHDAYS

- 1 - Hilda Whitaker
- 2 - George Tilley
- 3 - Soyla Steltenkamp
- 8 - Cathy Tomasco
- 17 - Debbie Wiands, Mikchail Zverev
- 19 - Tory Kautz
- 20 - Gail Simon
- 29 - Stephanie Holt
- 30 - David Steltenkamp

ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 - David & Adrienne Wiese - 68 yrs.
- 4 - Bob & Cherrill Geehan - 47 yrs.
- 8 - Bill & Betty Bakker - 51 yrs.
- 26 - Brendan & Meg Boyce - 20 yrs.

JULY

BIRTHDAYS

- 1 - James Gahn, Kaitlin Rose
- 6 - Eleanor Slonaker
- 13 - Roy Dunham, Dick Herodes
- 22 - Donna Benedict
- 23 - Chip Simon
- 25 - Janice Grace
- 26 - Marilyn Ronk
- 27 - Deanne Flynn
- 28 - James Selfridge

ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 - Jim & Gail Seymour - 46
- 3 - Don & Nancy Jacob - 37
- 16 - John & Naomi Van Steenburgh - 64
- Jay & Donna Benedict - 36
- 23 - Forrest & Phyllis Cousens - 63

AUGUST

BIRTHDAYS

- 3 - Barbara Markell
- 7 - Shirley Denhardt Emrich
- 11 - Paul Holt
- 12 - John Atherton, Karen Murphy
- 13 - Lynne Ryan
- 14 - David Wiese
- 15 - Evelyn Stevenson
- 19 - Diana Gensler
- 22 - Naomi Van Steenburgh
- 23 - Melanie Potter
- 24 - Analise Kautz
- 25 - Marian Liggera
- 27 - Natalie Wood
- 28 - Chris Parks

ANNIVERSARIES

- 13 - Dick & Connie Herodes - 53
- 15 - Paul & Stephanie Holt - 30
- 17 - Bob & Barbara Hutchings - 44
- 20 - William & Tammy Foster - 30
- 23 - Jim & Lou Gahn - 10

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