

October 2014

The Spirit

Of Ridgefield-Crystal Lake Presbyterian Church

Dear friends,

The following are extracts from a pastor-to-pastor article which I recently read. I agree with every word and felt it had to be shared.

"This is, hands down, the least favorite time of year for pastors everywhere: church budget planning season. Nobody likes budget planning, from the tedious work it entails to the way in which money necessarily informs the work of the church, but it's just one of those things we have to do. Many people today claim that churches are closing all over the country because our financial priorities are wrong. Compared to other nonprofits who work to keep overhead low, churches spend an average of 82 percent on personnel, buildings and administration — things that are not mission and ministry.

That's excessive, many believe, and with the institutional church losing credibility all over the place anyway, this state of affairs isn't going to help us draw people in. The solution, many believe is that "congregations will need to re-prioritize their budgets to emphasize direct forms of ministry that givers will agree directly respond to Jesus' two Great Commandments." This is a very common approach to church budgeting, but (how do I say this delicately?) it is WRONG!

Dead wrong because that is approaching a new situation — the decline of the institutional church in America — with an old solution. In other words, long budget committee meetings where we labor over how to free up big bucks by cutting the copy-machine contract are missing the point. I think before we do even one more church budget, we need a whole new framework for thinking about church and ministry.

In the past, we churches thought of ourselves as the backbones of society, places where good, moral and faithful people gather to pool resources so we can go out into the world and feed the homeless and convert people in order to save their souls. Keeping administrative costs as low as possible would help us to help the needy.

While many good and righteous things have come out of this view of ourselves, the truth is that that way of thinking is a pretty arrogant self-assessment borne out of a climate of popularity and ease. With our role in society shifting, we are no longer bastions of benevolent and overflowing food pantries that we graciously bestow on the less fortunate and then return to our churches filled with other scrubbed and spiritual do-gooders to plan new ways to do ministry.

What we are now is mission outposts. We are islands in a world full of increasingly adrift people. We are places of solace and hope, community and hospitality for people who are too smart to believe in God and pretty convinced they don't need the church — until they do. I cannot count the times people who never grew up in church stumble into worship looking for solace and discover — to their shock and amazement — liturgy, music and preaching that help them begin to connect with the tradition of the church and the message of Jesus, things they find they desperately need in their lives.

Or the inquiries I get from people looking for a nice staging area for their wedding, feeling they might vaguely enjoy some kind of traditional twist on things. After some sessions of required premarital discussion they begin to discover that maybe spiritual grounding of relationships has some merit they'd never considered. And there are the times I get called to do a funeral, visit a hospital or intervene in a crisis for people I don't know. They call because they don't know who else to call. The church-free lives they've constructed don't offer the kind of resources they need to navigate the death of a child, the loss of a job or the break-up of a marriage. So they come to church, and when they do they encounter grace-filled community that changes their lives.

All these things require substantial investment of resources that we have labeled as "administrative" — pastors, musicians, church staff, bulletins, air conditioning, janitorial services, capital repairs, instrument tuning — but all of these things are ministry. In fact, they're frontline, on the ground, where-the-rubber-meets-the-road kind of ministry.

How we go about being church in the world is changing radically. With that change, now more than ever, our whole life together in faith community is mission and ministry. And we'd better start seeing it that way soon, because the call to live "Jesus' two Great Commandments" in this world is going to take a heck of a lot more than our church mission budget line. It's going to take the full engagement of everything we have." Rev Dr Amy Butler Senior Pastor, Riverside Church NY, NY ~ Pastor John



Thank you for coming to my party!

I had such a wonderful time at my birthday party on September 21, and I am so glad that I could share it with all of you. So many great gifts were given on that day the gift of creative writing from David Dees and Bill Weller; the gift of music from Sherri Dees and the choir members; the gift of narration from Bill Weller; the gift of clever costuming from Paula Ekstrom, Kristi Geggie, and Bonnie Sheehan; the gift of creative technology/power point from Cara Vandermyde and Rick Thompson; the gift of organization and hospitality from Connie Rasmussen, Sharon Ray, and Cindy Harvey. And last but not least, the gift of your celebratory spirit and generosity. I had a wonderful time and I hope you did too! May we continue to celebrate God's grace.

Love,

The Church

Time & Talent Stewardship Survey

As we celebrate 175 years of God's grace and generosity here at RCLPC, we give thanks for the gifts you share with one another and others in need. Thank you for completing the Time and Talent Stewardship Survey. Over the next weeks you will be hearing from ministry leaders, inviting your participation in ministry.

If you did not have a chance to complete a survey, you can find a copy on the ushers' tables or online at rclpc.org, then click the Giving to RCLPC button, Time and Talents. Returned paper surveys can be placed on the office desk.

Please join us as Ministers of RCLPC on this continuing journey together.

If you're unable to be actively involved at this time, we appreciate your prayers for the leaders, caregivers, administrators, and other volunteers who help us share God's grace and generosity with others.

Blessings,
Stewardship Team

THANK YOU FOR FIVE MONTHS OF PADS LUNCHES

Every Friday morning at 9:30 AM. (22 Fridays), May thru September, RCLPC volunteers made 30 or 32 sandwiches and provided fruit, sweets, juice, and chips for the PADS shelter in Woodstock. Many volunteered and deserve our thanks and appreciation. The following volunteers, however, continued to be the Core of this Mission, not just for 5 months, but throughout the entire year: Cheryl Brincks, Marge Stewart, Kathy and Bob Novak, Karen Nelson. It cannot happen without them.



RCLPC Café

is looking for coordinators for the first 2014-15 adult dining event



tentatively scheduled for October 25. Want to help? You could host a pot luck (or ask someone with a larger home to join in) to kick-off the year. Or, how about picking a restaurant where people can meet, so good food and fun can help everyone decide what to do for this season. RCLPC Café has existed under many names since at least the 70's, so it fills an adult social dimension at our church. The office will keep this date on the calendar until October 12th, so contact the office if you wish to volunteer to continue this program. Records of who, where and what from last year are available, so please call the office today to keep the Café going.

What is Scrip Fundraising?

It is fundraising while you shop. Purchase Scrip gift cards for your everyday purchases...groceries, clothes, gas, dining out and the cash rebate will go towards our RCLPC PAD's program. Pick out the retailer you use and order your Scrip cards today. Ordering is easy. Take an order form off the bulletin board in the Connecting Link, fill it out, write your check to RCLPC and place it in Joan Jensemas box or the office basket. You will receive a e-mail to notify that your cards are here. It takes about a week or so to receive the cards from the deadline date. Orders for October are due Sunday, October 26th by 11am. Questions...call or e-mail Nancy Blakely or Joan Jensema.



Mission Outreach Ministry Team is so thankful

for your support in helping us gather the supplies to make the 35 school kits requested by our Blackhawk Presbytery. Many hands truly made for lighter work as the pencils, sharpeners, crayons, notebooks, scissors, etc. came pouring in as a result of our request. Thank you so much.



Zatoun is Back!

A new shipment of Palestinian Olive oil is in! Get your bottle(s) of Fair Trade Extra virgin olive oil in Fellowship Hall next to the coffee cart. You will enjoy its flavor while helping Palestinian farmers and other projects on the West Bank.





Building and Grounds Notes

We had the carpets steam cleaned in Fellowship Hall, the nurseries, and spot cleaned some coffee and wine stains. We have a carpet pad issue where we take communion that

will be worked on soon.

We have decided to offer space to a Tourette's syndrome support group. They will probably meet about once a month during the school year using the basement middle school room on choir nights.

If you feel the need to adjust the thermostats, please ensure the fan is left in the auto position. We are finding them in the on position which shortens the life of the fan and motors and drives up our electricity costs.



November Spirit Deadline

is **OCTOBER 31ST!**

Please submit all articles, etc by that day. Thank you so much! - Jenny



Calling for Diapers, Diapers and MORE Diapers!!!

In conjunction with RCLPC's 175th anniversary celebration the Mission Outreach Team is calling upon our congrega-

tion's history of incredible generosity by supporting the local Diaper Bank. Please bring diapers of any size or give a monetary donation that will be used to purchase.

The challenge: 1839 (RCLPC's founding year) diapers by the end of October.

Diapers and/or donations can be brought to the bin located outside the office. Thank you for your support of this mission that has a large need in our community!

- Mission Outreach Team

Fair Trade Coffee Cart

A new supply of fair trade coffee, tea, and chocolate has arrived! New this fall are the Single serve cups in both regular and decaf.

The foil top and cup are recyclable, and the paper filter and grounds compostable.

By purchasing fairly traded products through the Presbyterian Coffee Project -- the products you find on the Coffee Cart in Fellowship Hall, you are directly supporting the Presbyterian Hunger Program's essential relief and development work around the world. Payment is by cash or check to RCLPC, placed in the small box on the cart. Thank you!



~ Mission Team

Youth Ministry: The Ever Changing Job



Whenever I pick up a book about youth ministry, the first thing that I do is check when it was published. Finding the year somewhere inside the front cover gives me a good idea of how helpful the book is going to be for me. Anything that was published 10 or more years ago can often have outdated information and ideas.

Now I am not saying that all of these books should be thrown into the trash and never seen again; they do have some use, but for the most part are difficult to use in today's youth ministry world. This is the case because of how quickly our the youth culture changes and how quickly youth ministry itself changes.

Let me show you what I mean. I graduated from high school in 2009, a mere five years ago. We all had cell phones in my youth group but few of us had smartphones. Fast forward to now. Most students have smartphones with instant access to any kind of information that they want. They are also constantly in contact with people through texting, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites. The whole youth culture has gone under a massive change in the past five years.

Youth ministry has also undergone a huge change in the past five years. With the massive changes to the youth culture, youth ministry has no choice but to adapt. Youth ministry used to be about entertaining. Basically the goal was to get students in the door any way possible. This led to a lot of churches going all out for their youth ministries. Youth rooms were decorated with cool looking furniture and multimedia systems with the latest equipment. It was meant to just entertain. When the youth culture changed, students found that they could find other places to be entertained. Many youth ministries still continue to use this model and often find themselves stuck or with a group of students that know nothing about the Christian faith. What these ministries do not realize is that students actually want to have a place to learn more about Christianity.

This brings us to the here and now. At RCLPC, my main, number one, highest priority is to lay the foundations of Christianity in the lives of students. This does not mean that our youth ministries won't be fun. It does mean that my priorities will be different than that of a youth ministry of five years ago. Just as fashion and tastes in music change, youth ministry needs to take care of what the students desire. Research has shown that students desire to learn more about God and how to live a life for God. Sadly, youth ministry has gotten away from this in an effort to entertain. The problem with just entertaining is that students can find a million other places to be entertained and church does not become a priority. There has to be more that we give them at church than just entertainment. We have to give them the knowledge that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior and that living a life for him is ultimately the best! Youth culture is ever changing and youth ministry will have to keep changing along with it. - Matt Brown

RCLPC Stewardship 2015

Thankfulness

Celebrating 175 years of God's Grace and Generosity

Celebrating 175 Years of God's Grace and Generosity

We are celebrating the gifts of God's grace and generosity here at RCLPC by giving thanks! God has truly blessed us and calls us to reach out and bless others in need. They say Thankfulness is a way of life--where we look at everything as a gift from God. Will you join us as we move forward in the direction God is calling us?

On Sunday, October 26, we will celebrate God's generosity towards us and honor God's invitation to bless others. We'll present our pledges for dedication as an act of Worship at the 9:00 and 11:00 am services.

We thank you for prayerfully considering your response to God's grace and generosity in your lives. You can return your 2015 Pledge of Financial Support card in one of three ways:

- Mail the Pledge Card back to RCLPC in the enclosed envelope .
- Bring it with you to the worship services on Sunday, October 26, so that we may dedicate our pledge cards and regular offerings.
- Complete your Pledge Card online at rclpc.org. Click on 'Pledge Now'. If you give online, please bring your pledge card as a symbol of your gift.

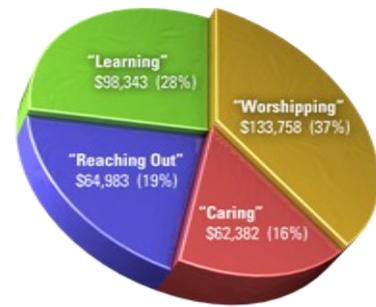
Pledge cards will be mailed out October 10.

Thank you again for the many ways you have helped RCLPC share God's grace and generosity with others.

Blessings,

Rick Thompson, John Fankhauser, Lois Johnson, Dorothy Vick, John Dillon, Linda Schweers, Patrick Kay

RCLPC 2014 BUDGET: \$359,466



- “Learning” \$98,343 (28%)
- “Reaching Out” \$64,983 (19%)
- “Worshipping” \$133,758 (37%)
- “Caring” \$62,382 (16%)

Together we give to financially support the mission and ministry of Ridgefield-Crystal Lake Presbyterian Church. Who we are as a church unfolds in our worshipping, our learning, our caring, and our reaching out. Our financial resources are generously given so that this congregation will continue their lives of ministry, doing God’s work and showing God’s love.

The narrative budget described here provides glimpses of how we live out our vision statement in practical ways. It’s a story of our people and our mission, melding into one financial portrait. Here is the broad story of our giving across the life of the church.

Worshipping

\$133,758 -- 37% of our 2014 budget

Our church **gathers** as a community of faith to celebrate God’s presence and listen for God’s call to service in our world. We experience God through a variety of music and visual arts. Pastor John Dillon and Music Director Sherri Dees plan the weekly worship services held at 9am and 11am, with additional special services.

Our worshipping includes:

- ministry leadership in worship and preaching
- choirs, vocalists, instruments, and music
- banners and decorations
- scripture readers/liturgists
- bulletins and offering envelopes
- ushers, greeters, and space for worship and communion preparation • worship resources, hymnals, projection
- space, office staff, and supplies

Caring

\$62,382 -- 16% of our 2014 budget

We share a warm welcome for all through our hospitality and fellowship. Ongoing **care and support** is offered to all members and friends of our congregation. Our pastor, deacons, and volunteers respond to individuals in times of crisis, such as illness or bereavement, and in times of joy. We strive to be a caring community where each person is able to feel the love of God.

Our caring includes:

- pastor, deacon, and volunteers
- visits to hospitals and senior residences
- premarital and marital counseling
- bereavement counseling
- pre-baptism visits
- Spirit newsletter distribution
- cards, visits, phone calls, and meals
- Breadbasket Ministry for first-time visitors
- maintenance of the church building and grounds • space, office staff, and supplies

Learning

\$98,343 -- 28% of our 2014 budget

Through faith formation, each of us grows in our knowledge of what it means to be the people of God in our world. We provide education for children and youth, pre-school through 12th grade, a confirmation class, and three adult class options at the 10am education hour. Youth meetings are offered for middle school and high school youth.

Our learning includes:

- church school for children, youth, and adults
- adult inquirers classes
- confirmation classes
- Director of Youth and Children's Ministry, Matt Brown • youth meetings
- Vacation Bible School
- Men's Breakfast Group and Women's Group
- book discussion group
- space, supplies, office staff and curriculum

Reaching Out

\$64,983 -- 19% of our 2014 budget

Our ministry continues in the world. We provide time and money for God's work beyond our church walls. Our church has a strong ministry of outreach both locally and through the PC(USA). We are called to seek peace and justice for others and for the earth.

Our reaching out includes:

- financial support of local organizations
- support of PC(USA) mission workers
- PC(USA) General Assembly, Synod, and Presbytery per capita assessments
- Blackhawk Presbytery mission
- action alerts of urgent compassion, peace, and justice matters
- staffing the Crystal Lake Food Pantry on assigned days
- Earth Care Congregation activities
- Global Gift Shop and ongoing fair trade coffee, tea, and chocolate
- Easter baskets, Giving Tree, hygiene kits, school supplies
- fundraisers (rummage sale and golf outing) to support RCLPC's mission and ministries • forums, movie nights, and speakers about timely issues and concerns
- space and supplies

Reaching Out Beyond the Church Budget

The recently established J.C. Button Foundation accepts gifts for the long-term financial health of the church, its programs, and its ministries through supplemental contributions from members and friends.

Another way we reach beyond our budget and provide additional support and funding, in our local community and farther afield is through special events and collections. Our "above and beyond" giving of approximately \$22,000 includes:

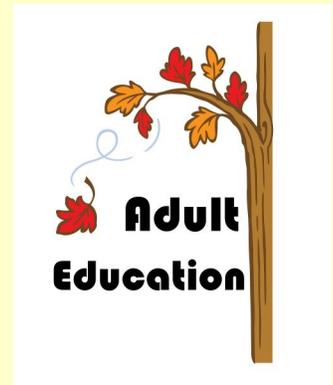
- CROP Walk
 - PC(USA) offerings
 - lunches for PADS guests
 - Cookie Walk giving
 - scholarships for Fairhaven and Colombian students • food truck hospitality and food distribution

Thank you for your generosity in all these areas.

Plan Ahead for Adult Ed

Living the Gospel beyond the US while in the USA An exciting Adult Education series is coming to RCLPC this fall.

Beginning October 12, Alice Haznedl will facilitate a class using Zionism Unsettled, a study guide prepared by the Israel Palestine Mission Network of the PC(USA).



What role have Zionism and Christian Zionism played in shaping attitudes and driving historical developments in the Middle East and around the world? How do Christians, Jews, and Muslims understand the competing claims to the land of Palestine and Israel? What steps can we take to bring peace, reconciliation, and justice to the homeland that Palestinians and Israelis share?

Zionism Unsettled embraces these critical issues fearlessly and with inspiring scope. The booklet and companion DVD draw together compelling and diverse viewpoints from Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Israel, Palestine, the US, and around the globe. By contrasting mainstream perceptions with important alternative perspectives frequently ignored in the media, *Zionism Unsettled* is an invaluable guide to deeper understanding.

Released in January 2014 to immediate critical acclaim, *Zionism Unsettled* consists of a 74-page illustrated booklet and a free companion DVD.

Ponder these questions as you prepare for an enlightening experience and an opportunity to see the world and the Gospel in a new light.

Note: Participants in this class are informed that the Zionism Unsettled study guide, prepared by the Israel Palestine Mission Network (a PCUSA Mission agency), was the subject of a PCUSA General Assembly resolution this past June, well after the publication and distribution of the study guide. The resolution declares that Zionism Unsettled does not represent the views of PCUSA. If you have questions, please contact Alice Haznedl or Mike Rugh, Compassion, Peace and Justice Team facilitator.

Come and see what the fuss is all about.