

## Community Building

Church committee meetings can sometimes be so agenda driven that they neglect the human bonding that can strengthen their witness.

Humor can be an effective nurturer of relationships. A good beginning conversation would be to ask each committee member to tell a story about something that happened to them, at least in retrospect, they thought was funny. The Committee Moderator can set the tone by telling some stories that have happened to him/her. The common experience is to discover that as each tells a story, it will trigger the memory of another story in someone else's life.

Remember we are all members of the same family; brothers and sisters in Christ.



### Scholarship assistance is available

Is there an event or conference you are wanting to attend? Could your learning be used in your congregation and/or in the Presbytery to fulfill the Presbytery of Lake Michigan mission statement and core values? Complete the application can be found on the Shepherding Ministry Team web page, [www.lakemichiganpresbytery.org/shepherding](http://www.lakemichiganpresbytery.org/shepherding), and return it to the Presbytery office.



*This bulletin is published quarterly for congregational distribution by the Presbytery of Lake Michigan.*

*To contribute content please email [news@lakemichiganpresbytery.org](mailto:news@lakemichiganpresbytery.org).*

**CONGREGATIONAL CONNECTION**

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Fourth Quarter 2009, Volume6, Issue 4

# Focus on Shepherding

*The Shepherding Ministry Team serves the Presbytery of Lake Michigan by facilitating opportunities for groups to develop and experience spiritual growth and support.*



### Lectionary Discussion

The Shepherding Ministry Team is considering starting an online discussion group based on the lectionary readings for each Sunday. An initial article would be posted by noon on Tuesday of each week and then those participating in the discussion could post entries anytime during the week. The purpose of this group will be to "encourage the sharing of ideas and deepen the understanding of the Scripture readings for each Sunday." If you are interested in participating in this group please e-mail Paul Tomlinson at the Cadillac church at [presbypastor55@sbcglobal.net](mailto:presbypastor55@sbcglobal.net)

The discussion will start Tuesday, November 24 for the first Sunday of Advent.

## To Your Health

The fall of each year presents us with the potential for getting the flu. This year, of course, is no different and has the added element of the HINI flu. The statistics and facts pertaining to both the seasonal and HINI flu fluctuate as more is learned about this year's occurrences. The availability of vaccine and the vaccine recommendations for individuals for each vaccine also exhibit frequently changing information.



The best recommendation to keep one protected from the flu, as well as respiratory illnesses, is to stay informed about the most current information regarding this year's flu. One should also seek the recommendation of one's own health care provider. It is important to remember that both the seasonal and the HINI flu are diseases that can cause much illness, hospitalization & death each

year. It is best to protect ourselves as best we can. Obtaining the seasonal flu vaccine in the fall is a most important action for most everyone. The HINI flu vaccine guidelines for administration are directed to those categories which are deemed to be most at risk of the disease.

As we become more aware of the possibility of getting ill or being exposed to those who are, we are reminded to take good care of ourselves, and, also, to be mindful of our exposure to those who are ill.

Prevention suggestions to best avoid getting ill:

- ⇒ Wash one's hands often
- ⇒ Avoid touching one's eyes, nose or mouth with one's hands
- ⇒ Sneeze or cough into one's arm/elbow instead of one's hands
- ⇒ Stay home if feeling ill
- ⇒ Practice good health habits by eating well, exercising & getting enough sleep

Many Presbyterian churches value the tradition of "passing the peace," and the caring and relationship building that occurs with that practice. Some members have expressed concern about this practice in the flu season. It is important not to let illness, or the worry about it, to define us. Each member should decide his or her individual approach by respecting one's own situation. Respect and dignity are fundamental to one's choices and actions. For example if you are not comfortable shaking hands at this time, say to another "I would prefer to just say to you "peace be with you." Thus the practice of wishing our fellow parishioners remains intact. Certainly if one is ill it is best to avoid hand contact. And always remember that our hands are generally dirty and it is advisable to wash your hands often.

## The Encouragement Project

Since May, 2007, the Encouragement Project has been part of the relational outreach to the clergy of The Presbytery of Lake Michigan. Below is part of the support process that four clergy Encouragers bring to 11 to 14 Honorably Retired Clergy in their geographical region.

Encouraging is the process of coming alongside a retired clergy colleague, spouse or survivor to help them clarify God's agenda for their lives and ministry while seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance to see that the agenda becomes a reality. Stated another way, Encouraging helps retired clergy colleagues and their spouses to listen to God about where change is needed and then equips and empowers them to make the necessary changes.

The Encouraging relationship is a crucible—a strong, resilient, safe, non-toxic, dependable vessel in which positive change can safely take place for the Encouragee, for people with whom she or he has relationships, and for the encourager as well.

**"For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory."**

*1 Thessalonians 2:11-12 (NIV)*

The Encourager is not a problem-solver, teacher, advisor, instructor, or expert. The Encourager is a listener, a sounding board, and an awareness-raiser. An Encourager helps a colleague explore and discover the truth. An Encourager helps a colleague discover and fulfill her or his God-given calling....

The Encourager brings a courage to be present. Being fully present in a face to face encounter has to do with the basics of being attentive—making in eye contact, leaning in, maintain an open posture—but it also reaches more deeply inside us.

\* Encouragers must have genuine curiosity about the people they are encouraging—about what is going on in their lives, the issues they are facing, the questions they are asking.

\* Encouragers must nurture an insatiable appetite to learn more and more about who the other person is, where she or he wants to go, and what it all means.

\* Encouragers must decide in advance that what is important to the other person is important to the Encourager as well. Go there. Stay with it. It will often lead to something deeper.