



# A HOME AT THE HEART OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN- MADISON SINCE 1907

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Spring 2008

## FROM THE CHAPLAIN INTERNSHIP

Tracy Nolan

*The chaplain internship position builds upon our desire to develop future church leaders. The person in this role is a college graduate discerning a call to full-time ministry. The intern gains practical ministry experience along with mentoring opportunities.*

It's hard to believe that it has been almost a year since I moved here to Madison and became part of the Pres House community. I feel like I just arrived, yet I also feel like I've been here for years!

The first word that comes to mind when I think of my time at Pres House is "community." This past year has certainly been focused on creating and shaping a new community here, composed of both apartment residents and worship participants. Stepping onto a campus of over 40,000 students doesn't bring to mind thoughts of close-knit families, but being a part of Pres House certainly does.

Our student staff members (Roojahs) have done a great job creating a sense of home in the new Pres House Residence, making the residence not just another apartment building but a place with friendly, helpful faces. We have had multiple holiday parties, movie nights, and study nights in the new residence, as well as various dinner and discussions

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## A STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

Kelsey Wolff

My name is Kelsey Wolff and I am a graduating senior majoring in Family and Consumer Education. As I prepare for graduation and the end of my time here on campus, I have been thinking about the things I will miss most about Madison. For me, Pres House definitely ranks high on the list. I have been attending Pres House for the last three years, serving on the Pres House Team and worship team. I found Pres House while searching for a church at a spirituality fair held on campus. I had plans to check out a number of churches until I found the right fit for me. Pres House was the first and last church in my search for a spiritual home here on campus.

Prior to attending Pres House, I did not have much experience with going to church or a strong sense of faith. Pres House supported me in my spiritual journey and stood by me even in my moments of question and doubt. In addition to supporting me spiritually, Pastor Mark, Pastor Erica, and our chaplain intern Tracy, were always willing to catch up over a cup of coffee and discuss issues in my academic and personal life as well. There may have been times when I did not want to hear what they were saying, but when I look back at those times, they were often right and always had my best interest at heart.

One of my favorite Pres House memories is from our spring break trip to Gulfport, Mississippi, in March of 2006. It was during that trip that I began to feel God's presence and see his hands at work. I also got to know my travel mates better and establish new friendships. (Eighteen hours in a van will do that to you!) The friendships I have made with the worshipping community have been truly amazing. I know that I can count on this group of friends to be there for me whenever I call upon them and that they will never judge me. I will miss the conversations at Sunday dinner, and the great fun we always have on our fall retreat. As I move on to the next chapter in my life, I look forward to meeting those who will be a part of my continued spiritual growth. ☩

*Nolan continued from page 1*

on current events and spiritual issues. Our students have taken weekly trips to local coffee shops, getting to know the best places for good blends and getting to know each other. They have biked to the supermarket, walked to the Farmer's Market, and run around Picnic Point together, as a community.

Students from all over campus have taken part in our weekly worship services—the most memorable of which for me involved a Lenten tree, where students could reflect and respond to sermons by writing thoughts on “leaves” and posting them on the tree. We have had student-led Bible studies, a weekly prayer group, and even jam sessions led by our musician-in-residence Travis Agnew in the Residence recreation room. Students have taken part in a variety of service

opportunities, including serving food at a men's shelter, helping out at a food pantry, and building at a Habitat for Humanity site. Some students also chose to spend their spring break in Chavies, Kentucky, working on home repairs and getting to know the families of Appalachia.

It has been a privilege to share all these moments with the students here at UW-Madison and the community at Pres House. I have been blessed with the role of working with our student staff to create a community in the Pres House Residence and the opportunity to preach on two occasions at worship. I have delivered cookies to residents, put up siding with students in Kentucky, served food with students at the men's shelter in Madison, played the “drum box” at worship, and had late night discussions with residents. Perhaps the most enjoyable part of

my job here at Pres House has been having coffee with students, hearing their joys and struggles and sharing in their faith.

Being here at Pres House has also given me a chance to grow personally, to seek out my calling and purpose and to dig into my own faith. The Pres House staff have been great mentors in that journey, as have other pastors and leaders with whom they have connected me. Looking into the year ahead, I am excited to continue that growth.

I am eager to continue the work of community here at Pres House, through the summer and into the new academic year. Let us pray for the continued presence of God in this Pres House community! There will be new faces and familiar faces, growth and transformation, and plenty of coffee to be had! ☘



*Top row from left to right: members of the worship team lead carol singing at the Christmas party, Lenten tree, a resident carving a pumpkin at Halloween*

*Bottom row from left to right: students studying in the Pridham Lounge, preparing food at the men's shelter, the chaplain intern serving as part of the spring break team*

## FREE DINNER!

*Rev. Erica Liu, Campus Pastor*

What better way to get students in the door than by the lure of free food? The poor, starving student stereotype aside, food is a sure way to gather crowds of people. From my office at Pres House, I have a beautiful view of Library Mall and all the activities that take place there. Often I watch various groups compete to attract the thousands of students walking by, whether they are drawing attention to a certain political issue or trying to introduce a new beverage into the market. Inevitably, the table that is giving away free food always has a crowd around it.

Jesus knew this, of course! While he literally fed thousands of people by the Sea of Galilee, he also offered spiritual food which gathered crowds of people as he traveled around the region of Judea. Rich or poor, powerful or weak, he understood that there was a deep hunger for God that lay within each individual. Taking the whole person into consideration, Jesus

sought to meet their physical and spiritual needs. Often this happened simultaneously, as he would reveal a divine word over a shared meal together.

The Lord's Supper epitomizes this truth, as Jesus used common elements to embody sacred graces. Bread and cup, real food, are used



to communicate the mysteries of God's love to us in the celebration of communion. In the Gospel of Luke, it was when the disciples were eating dinner that their eyes were opened and they were able to recognize the risen Christ in their midst. The advent of the church potluck flows naturally from a theological understanding that fellowshiping over a meal makes space for encounters with Jesus.

At Pres House we celebrate the Lord's Supper each Sunday and continue our worship service over a shared meal. Eating and drinking with the community of faith can satisfy a wide variety of hunger pangs, whether they are loneliness, despair, or confusion. When students

come, they are invited for a "home-cooked" dinner, lovingly prepared by their church family in anticipation of a holy encounter. Perhaps the enticement of free food draws students in, but as their eyes are opened to reveal Christ's presence, they realize that they've come to much more than free dinner. A great banquet table awaits them with the company of a gracious God who promises to feed and nourish them. Thanks be to God! ☩

### Alumni Updates

Would you like to know what Pres House Alums have been up to lately? We invite you to share about weddings, births, jobs, families, moves, special events and other important life activities with an alumni update. In upcoming newsletters we will publish these updates. If you include an email address, we will also print it.

Please limit your update to no more than 100 words and include the years you were part of the ministry. The staff of Pres House may need to edit your submission for space considerations.

Email your update to [info@preshouse.org](mailto:info@preshouse.org) or mail it to Pres House at 731 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53703. We'd love to hear from you and let others know what you've been up to!

### Support Pres House

Throughout this newsletter you have read about the exciting activities happening at Pres House. Ministry at Pres House is only possible through generous donations by alumni, friends, and churches.

Please give today by using the enclosed envelope or send your contributions to Pres House at 731 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53703. You can also give online at [www.preshouse.org/donate](http://www.preshouse.org/donate).

Our deep gratitude extends to the following churches who have hosted "Free Dinner!" on Sunday evenings, creating space for students to be wholly fed. Without their support in providing not only the food but the hours of preparation, cooking, serving, and cleaning up, we would not be able to offer this ministry to the campus.

Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church, Cottage Grove  
Caledonia Presbyterian Church, Portage  
Christ Presbyterian Church, Madison  
Covenant Presbyterian Church, Madison  
Dale Heights Presbyterian Church, Madison  
First Presbyterian Church, Baraboo  
First Presbyterian Church, Lodi  
First Presbyterian Church, Waunakee  
Oakland-Cambridge Presbyterian Church  
Union Presbyterian Church, Monroe  
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Madison



*Four graduating seniors hold candles from a special ceremony reminding them of their role as light and salt to the world.*

PRES HOUSE SEEKS TO BE A SPIRITUAL HOME AT THE HEART OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON CAMPUS. IN KEEPING WITH THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION OF HOSPITALITY, PRES HOUSE IS DEDICATED TO PROVIDING A RELIGIOUS CENTER AND HIGH QUALITY STUDENT HOUSING TO PROMOTE THE SPIRITUAL, EMOTIONAL, AND INTELLECTUAL GROWTH OF RESIDENTS AND MEMBERS OF THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY. PRES HOUSE IS A MINISTRY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, U.S.A., AND WELCOMES INDIVIDUALS OF EVERY PERSPECTIVE AND BACKGROUND.

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