



VOICE

A HOME AT THE HEART OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON SINCE 1907 | WINTER 2014

JOURNEY OF FAITH: TEN YEARS OF PRES HOUSE MINISTRY



with a quiz. (See sidebar, page five) The evening concluded with a video of Walter and Karen Pridham's story of meeting and marrying at Pres House and why they continue to support the ministry today.

One weekend later on November 1, the chapel was transformed into a beautiful banquet space for the main event—our 10-Year Celebration and Reunion. The evening began with mingling and hors d'oeuvres in Pridham Lounge. We then moved into the chapel for a concert featuring student musicians on saxophone, flute, piano, guitar, and other instruments. Worship Director Michael Hillestad also demonstrated the broad range of the recently updated Pres House Organ. Following a catered dinner, Pastor Mark shared some comments and introduced a video highlighting the stories of 18 students, board members, and alumni. The evening concluded with all in attendance joining in song to give thanks to God for God's faithfulness over the years.

You are invited to watch the video that was shared, view pictures from the event, and listen to an audio file of Pastor Mark's comments—all on our website at www.preshouse.org/celebration. Part of Pastor Mark's comments are also printed here for your reading pleasure.

Pastor Mark's Reflection from the 10-Year Celebration and Reunion on November 1, 2014:

"A lot has happened here at Pres House in the past decade. Starting from zero students in 2004, by God's grace the community has grown every year since the very first students, Steve Nelson and Becky Schwei, walked through the doors. Now as many as 100 students worship in this space on Sundays and we reach more than 450 students per year. Because we send so many

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This fall more than 150 students, alumni, donors, and friends of Pres House came together for two special events to celebrate the many generations who have lingered inside our walls and found love, friendship, faith, and community. We gave special thanks for the rebirth of ministry that has occurred in the last ten years by God's grace and through the efforts of the Board of Directors, volunteers, donors, alumni, students and Pastors Mark and Erica.

The first event was an Ice Cream Social immediately following the UW-Madison Parade on Homecoming night. We enjoyed locally made Babcock Ice Cream and played Pres House People Bingo to meet folks with many different connections to Pres House. Then we tested our Pres House knowledge



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 from alumni, friends, and churches. **Please give today** by using the enclosed envelope or send your contributions to Pres House at 731 State Street, Madison, WI 53703. You can also give online at www.preshouse.org/donate.

folks out all over the world when they graduate and leave, we estimate we have served more than 3,500 students in the past decade.

In the past ten years students have volunteered more than 27,000 hours at shelters, food pantries, disaster relief, and other service projects. The parking lot that used to be behind Pres House has become a vibrant home for 250 students. More than 93 percent of our residents report a very positive experience living at Pres House Apartments and our renewal rate is higher than most, if not all, downtown student apartment buildings. This year four intentional micro-communities within the apartments engage in purposeful living and learning activities and service. And we are in a much stronger place financially. Our annual budget has grown 1,500 percent from



\$150,000 in 2004 to \$2.3 million today. There is a great deal to be thankful for.

I believe that there is a special spirit here at Pres House that transcends any one person, any one pastor, any one era in its history. As I have been reflecting on the spirit of Pres House and the past ten years the image of a large, old, oak tree comes to my mind.

107 years ago Rev. Matthew Allison and members of Christ Presbyterian Church planted a seed in the fertile soil of the University of Wisconsin community. That seed grew into a strong and powerful tree. Many of you met, worshipped, laughed, cried, served, and married here across the years as the tree grew taller and wider. Winds of change and difficulty have buffeted the tree over the years. In some seasons, the branches were bursting with leaves. In other seasons they were more barren. Ministry looked different in the spring, summer, fall, and winter of various years across many decades. But throughout it all the tree, the Spirit of Pres House, remained strong.

It remained strong, I am convinced, because of two key elements that any tree needs to live—water and sunlight. Water came in the form of time, prayer, money, energy, sweat, and tears that rained down on Pres House by countless volunteers, board members, student leaders, and donors—saints who gave of themselves so the next generation of students could find shelter in the tree. In just the last ten years board members volunteered more than 15,000 hours to help Pres House grow. Donors showered us with well over \$2 million in gifts. And churches fed more than 11,000 hungry mouths during our Sunday night dinners. Yes, you all have poured out the water that has made this tree strong. Thank you.

But more than anything else I give thanks for the sunlight. Our faithful and glorious God has shone light upon this place every moment of the past ten years...and the past 107 years. The light of Christ has turned all our efforts, our hopes, our dreams, even our mistakes into something beautiful. It is only by the light of God's grace and mercy that we sit can celebrate the last ten years. Thanks be to God!" ✝

TAKING TIME TO MAKE FRIENDS

by Ginger Morgan

Residents are busy this time of year at PH Apartments . . . the first major round of mid-terms are done, but exams, papers, projects and all manner of homework just keep coming from now until finals in December. The weekly Afternoon Tea and Conversation in the PH Apartment Rec Room arrives each Wednesday just in time to connect with neighbors (or roommates) and to laugh, snack, and enjoy a brief respite from work for an hour or so. PH Apartment Scholars gather each month for a program or activity. November's guest speaker, Gwen Drury, spoke with Scholars about the 100-year history of the Wisconsin

Idea. Other students have opted to get to know a resident from another culture by participating in the PH Apartment Coffee Buddies Program, which pairs an American student with an International Student for coffee and conversation.

As dusk falls earlier and the temperatures drop residents keep flocking to the monthly Drop-In Dinners. Whether providing a supportive community for students in recovery from addiction, or an opportunity to work together on a project through the Micro-Community Program, or facilitating the exploration of future callings and direction through vocational reflection, PH Apartments continues to foster community and connection in the midst of college life. ✿



PH APARTMENT UPDATE



PH Apartments has launched the Coffee Buddies Program, pairing domestic (U.S.) students with international students for conversation over coffee. Katie Hitchcock and Xintian ("Lucky") Liu have met for coffee almost weekly this fall! We're building community one cup of coffee at a time.

MICRO-COMMUNITY NEWS

by Helen Chao

Last year, I was randomly matched with five other girls to be roommates in the PH Apartments. We were all part of the PH Scholars program and bonded throughout the year with projects in the program. We decided to live again together this year and to start a micro-community. We noticed that there was a lot of wastage throughout the apartment since utilities are included with rent. We formed our micro-community on the idea of sustainability and raising awareness for environmental protection. The Energy Conservation Challenge was initiated last month to bring awareness to energy consumption. Simple things like decreasing the temperature of a thermostat by four degrees in the winter can reduce CO² emission by 800 pounds annually. We are monitoring the electricity meters of the apartments, and the floor with the greatest decrease in energy consumption will win a pizza party. We hope to promote the idea of sustainability in a fun and interactive way within the community throughout the year! ✿



BRING BACK THE BASEMENT



On many Sunday evenings at Pres House every seat is taken in the Pridham Lounge and students don't have room to sit down for dinner. We have a plan to change this.

Each month Ginger Morgan, Pres House Director of Residential Community, struggles to make a meal for up to 80 residents of the Pres House Apartments in our small, residential kitchen. We have a plan to change this.

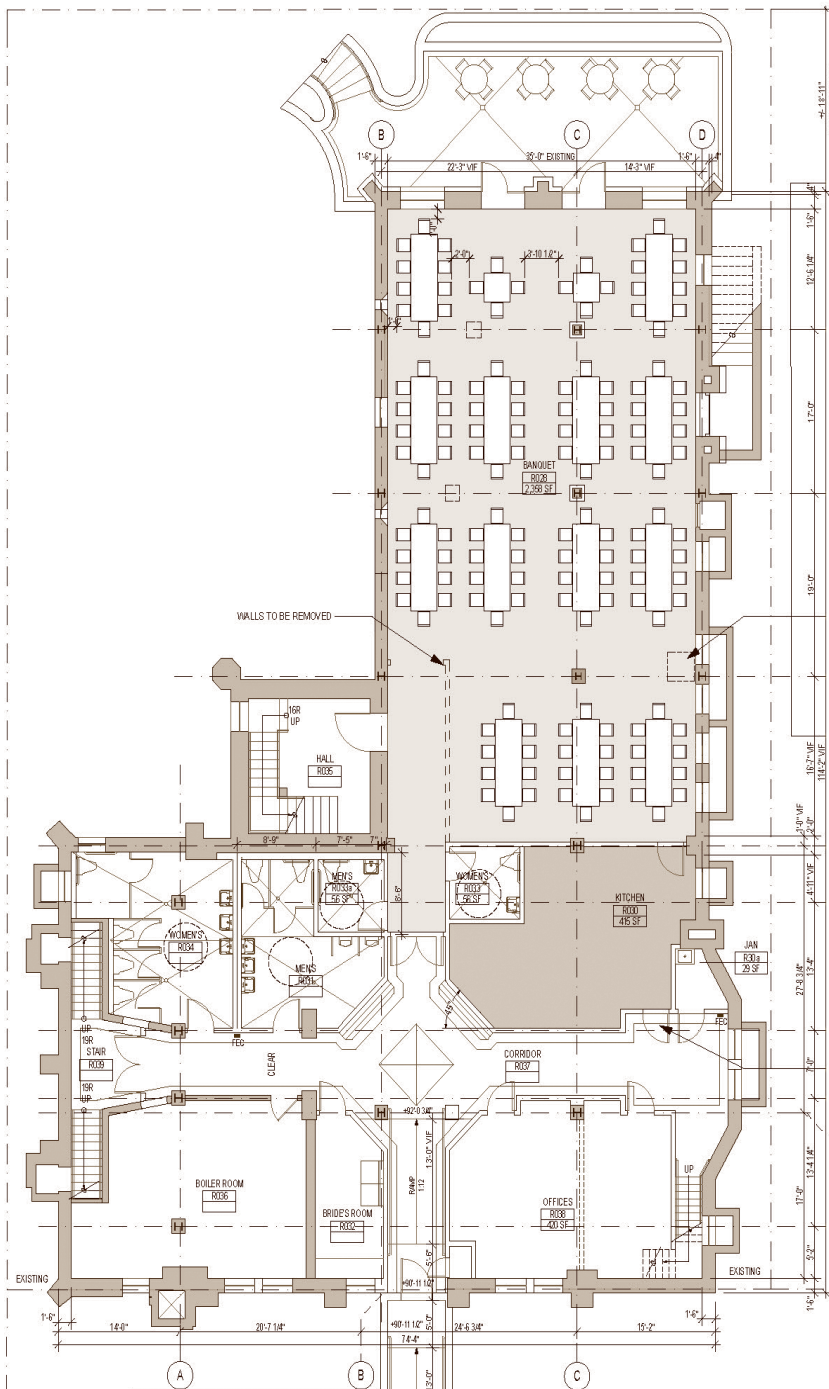
Every year we throw away more than 3,000 paper plates, 1,000 paper bowls, and 10,000 utensils during the serving of all of our meals and educational and social activities. This is because we do not have a commercial dishwasher to allow us to use real dishes and flatware. We have a plan to change this.

We plan to Bring Back the Basement!

As the ministry at Pres House has grown over the past decade, so has our need for space. Worship on Sunday evenings continues to draw more students each year. We have recently had multiple services with more than 80 students, sometimes as many as 120 or more. This is excellent—until we have to find room to sit down for dinner.

Dinner after worship is a central component of the ministry at Pres House in much the same way that Sunday night suppers were popular in decades past. The Pridham Lounge, where we eat, is a beautiful and warm space, but it cannot hold more than 80 people for dinner. So on some occasions we run out of room to seat people. If the room is full, students leave.

Staff, students, and board members had been discussing this problem this year when an unexpected opportunity presented itself. One student commented, "I wish Subway wasn't in the basement so we could use that space like students did in the 1940s and '50s."



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Basement Floor Plan - Option E

SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

Well, that wish can now become a reality. When Pres House went through its major building and renovation project in 2006-07, we needed to find creative ways to generate revenue to cover the approximately \$2 million cost of renovating the heritage Pres House chapel building. Our solution was to invite a restaurant tenant to lease the basement space to provide a steady income stream. Although it was never the ideal use of the space from a mission perspective, this arrangement with Subway has proven to be successful in meeting this revenue-generating need for the past seven years. We have always hoped that in the long run we could reclaim the basement to further our mission. This seemed like a far-off dream, however, as we had to enter into a long-term (20-year) agreement with Subway to secure the lease.

We are now presented with an unexpected and exciting opportunity. Subway has informed us that they will be breaking the lease and moving to a different location. The basement space will be open beginning January 2015. After much prayer and consideration, the Board of Directors at Pres House has decided to take advantage of this opportunity to Bring Back the Basement.

Starting in January we intend to renovate and expand the basement to be able to hold at least 120 people for Sunday night suppers and other large events. We will also install a commercial kitchen that will allow us to continue to serve monthly community meals to residents of the Pres House Apartments and cut down dramatically on the amount of paper and plastic products we throw away each year. We still plan to lease the space to a restaurant of some kind during the week to maximize its use, but this new project will give us room to grow and will provide much-needed facilities for the many



ministries we engage students in. To draw on the tree analogy described elsewhere in this newsletter. The tree of Pres House has grown enough recently that we need a transplant to a bigger pot.

The cost of the project is currently estimated at \$600,000. We are thrilled to announce that early in the development of this plan, Pres House received a pledge from an anonymous donor to match all other donations dollar for dollar all the way up to \$250,000! Since then we have received more than \$165,000 in additional pledges and gifts! This means we are more than two-thirds of the way toward our goal and only need about \$185,000 more to bring back the basement! We are seeking pledges across up to three years in support of this effort and invite you, our faithful donors and supporters, to help water the tree of Pres House for the next season so that even more students can find shelter in this incredible place.

To find out more about the Bring Back the Basement Project and/or to make a pledge please visit: www.preshouse.org/basement.



10 QUESTIONS FOR 10 YEARS

PRES HOUSE QUIZ

- 1) How old is Pres House?
- 2) In the 1950s a student walked into the chapel surprised to see Sunday worship happening. What was he wearing?
- 3) What is the oldest item stored in the vault?
- 4) How many bells are in the Pres House tower?
- 5) How do you get up into the Pres House tower?
- 6) What role did Pres House play in the protests of the 1960s?
- 7) What were some of the kinks that had to be worked out in the Pres House Apartment building when it first opened?
- 8) What does the term ROOJAH stand for?
- 9) How many ranks of pipes did the original Pres House organ have?
- 10) In what year was the Secret Service staked out in Pres House and why?

Answers on page 7

CLUSTERS

by Rev. Erica Liu

At Pres House, we try new things! For the past year, we have been experimenting with ways to fully engage the community in worshipping God. When people enter into the Pres House Chapel, clusters of chairs around small, colorful tables greet them instead of rows of pews. As folks sit down, they read a card that we have reprinted below.

This has been well received by the community and provoked thoughtful discussions about what it looks like to worship God as a community. We invite you to come join us on a Sunday afternoon to contribute to worship too! ♣

Our Worship Space

*We set up our worship space a little differently than you might expect;
here are some of the reasons why:*

- ❖ Worship is a communal time for us to be together; we are sitting around a common table, both literally and figuratively, as families do.
- ❖ Worship of God requires something from each of us; we are not passive recipients at a lecture or show. We have come to worship God!
- ❖ Worship involves all our senses—we listen, see, smell, touch, and taste.
- ❖ Being a little uncomfortable is normal and it's okay if you find it a bit awkward; the Holy Spirit often shows up in those moments and blesses us with grace (and remember, worship is not so much about our comfort zone as it is about focusing ourselves on God).
- ❖ That being said, we welcome one another, friend and stranger alike; we practice gracious hospitality when we come together as a mark of following Christ—so greet your neighbors!

Let us worship God!



"PRESBYWHEELIANS" RIDE FOR BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB

On Saturday, July 19, a team of more than 70 bicycle riders from Pres House, Covenant, Westminster, and Christ Presbyterian Churches and their friends, riding under the name "Presbywheelians," rode distances of 8, 25, and 50 miles in the Bike for Boys and Girls Club to raise money for the Boys and Girls Club of Dane County. We had a wonderful time and in the process raised a total of more than \$15,287, which put us at #8 among the 64 teams. Overall, the Bike for Boys and Girls Club has raised more than \$430,000 to support the club.

Pres House member Michael Orlowski reflects on his experience in being a part of the Presbywheelian team. "In cycling, there's this thing called a draft line. I was totally unaware that this physics marvel even existed until I signed up for the Boys and Girls Club bike ride. I wouldn't have discovered this riding strategy (and would have probably keeled over from exhaustion) if I hadn't ridden with other Pres House members as part of the Presbywheelians. In joining the race team I was saved from a lonely 25-mile slog, and I was part of an enthusiastic group of riders committed to helping the Madison community. From the encouragement of fellow team members and the saving grace of the draft line, to the team-branded jersey and our own tent for the picnic, taking part in the event with the Presbywheelians was a fantastic way to have great day outdoors while helping to make a difference in the Madison community.

The Boys and Girls Club of Dane County fuels kids with the inspiration to dream and the skills to achieve through quality programs in five core areas: Character and Leadership Development, Education and Career Development, Health and Life Skills, the Arts, Sports, Fitness and Recreation. The Club is open Monday through Saturday to ensure that young people have a safe and positive place to go. Each day, the lives of their members are influenced through working with trustworthy adults, certified teachers, and dedicated mentors. ♣



10 Questions for 10 Years - Answers

- 1) 107 years old, it was founded in 1907.
- 2) Underwear. He was a resident at Pres House and he thought it was a Saturday. He had heard the organ playing and burst into the chapel to confront the illicit organist, only to find that the congregation was in the middle of worship.
- 3) The yearbook from 1909.
- 4) Zero (trick question!).
- 5) There is a small trapdoor in the copy room that leads to the attic.
- 6) Pres House was a medical assistance site for protestors who were tear-gassed. It was also a warming spot for young members of the National Guard who could come in for the restroom and coffee as long as they left their guns outside.
- 7) The heat didn't work properly all the time, some toilets flooded, and one resident got stuck in the basement the night the building opened due to a glitch in the key system. All those problems have since been resolved!
- 8) Royal Order of Janitors and Hosts. The ROOJAHs lived in, and took care of Pres House, throughout much of its earlier history.
- 9) Five. After the organ was updated in 2010 it now has well over 100 digital and pipe ranks.
- 10) President Obama came to campus in 2010 and spoke on the steps of Memorial Library right outside of Pres House. The Secret Service set up a surveillance area in both Pres House buildings during the event.





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LIVING WITH PURPOSE

We are proud and inspired to share that former Pres House Student Intern Hannah Weinberg-Kinsey is currently living in Zambia, in Africa for one year as part of the Young Adult Volunteers program (a Presbyterian Mission-based organization). To hear about her experiences check out her blog site at: <http://zestzambia.blogspot.com/>



“Pres House helped me become who I am: a person on a faith journey, a leader, a friend, a girlfriend, a singer, a person responding to the world.”

— Hannah Weinberg-Kinsey