



SHARING
CHRIST'S LOVE
AT THE UNIVERISTY
OF WISCONSIN -
MADISON
SINCE 1907

IN THIS ISSUE . . .	
April 30 Event	2
Vision for the Future	3
Student Worship Service	4
New Logo	4
New Staff	5

Summer 2005

FROM THE PROGRAM
DIRECTOR

Erica Liu

The story below is adapted from a speech given by Ms. Liu at the April 30, 2005, event (see page 2).

I did not grow up in a Christian home and prior to entering college, had no interest whatsoever in the Christian faith. Christianity was irrelevant and had nothing to offer. This was my state of mind when I left home for college.

Like many students at a large, public university, I was confronted with a diversity of ideas, beliefs, and people. I would like to say that I acted like a responsible adult at the young age of 18 and that I navigated my way safely and successfully through my first year. The truth, however, is that I floundered spectacularly. I tried

alcohol, partying, and various other scenes on the university campus. This wasn't satisfying and I found myself lonely, depressed, and lost. During this time I was living in one of the university dorms. One of my roommates was a Christian, as were some of the other friends I had made in the dorm. Because I lived with these people, I was witness to their daily lives, struggles, and faith in Jesus. We began spending many late nights in the dorm lounge talking about God, faith, and the Bible. I became a relentless pursuer and interrogator of my friends, questioning them about every aspect of their faith.

Eventually one of my friends invited me to come with him to the Presbyterian Church he attended. I was hesitant, having many preconceived notions of what church and church people were like, but decided

I would just check it out. None of my expectations were met, and I was surprised to find the college pastor in blue jeans singing a Van Morrison song and welcoming questions about the bible. It was enough to keep me open to coming back for another visit.



Continued on page 2



A STUDENT
PERSPECTIVE

Becky Schwei

My name is Becky Schwei and I will be a sophomore this fall planning on majoring in kinesiology and Spanish. I was born and raised in Madison, and I attended Westminster Presbyterian Church until I moved to campus last fall. I have been involved with Pres House for the past year, and I have loved becoming a part of this open faith community

Throughout the past year some of the students, under the guidance of Mark Elsdon, began planning a student-led worship service that will begin in the fall. In order to learn what has worked for other Christian groups in the past, I will be attending a leadership training conference this summer in Louisville, Kentucky. I am very excited to be attending this conference, and I am also very excited to be a member of the Pres House community in the coming years. ☩

Liu continued from page 1

By the end of my first year at school, I had enough experiences with my Christian friends from the dorms to know that I wanted to have what they had. I saw how their faith helped them understand their place in the world, gave them purpose, and fostered a community with deep relationships. Through that year I had a taste of what my life could be like, and I decided I wanted to join the feast.

I went back to the church and found not only a spiritual home where

I could wrestle with my questions and grow in my faith, but also a home with family. It was in this worshipping community that I was truly known and accepted with all my gifts and all my brokenness. I was encouraged to become who God intended me to be and was treated with grace when I fell short. It was in this community that I first experienced my call to become a minister to university students, and God has now brought me to Pres House to fulfill this calling.

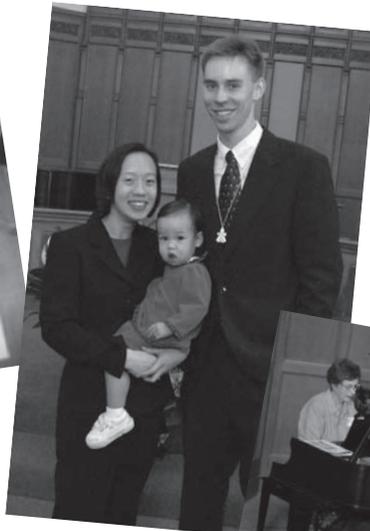
I share my story with you because I believe that it is not a unique story,

but echoes many students' experiences during college. College is a time when students ask deep spiritual questions, seek authentic and meaningful community, and often make significant decisions about who they are and what they will pursue in their lives. We here at Pres House are seeking to become a home away from home for students, to walk alongside them in their journeys, and to share the grace of God in all aspects of their lives. ✠

On April 30, 2005, Pres House students, alumni and friends gathered for the installation service of Rev. Mark Elsdon, a reunion of alumni and the unveiling of future ministry plans.



Above: Karen Pridham and Joy Patterson share memories at the reception.



Right: Erica, Emma & Mark after the service.



Above: Singing during the worship service.



Left: Installation service prayer.

Below: UW-Madison Student Jonathan Chamberlain plays an original piece specifically written for the service.

Pres House Board of Directors

We thank our outgoing board members Cheryl Anderson, Bruce Kramer and Richard Schmidt for their service to Pres House. We welcome new board members Gretchen Lord Anderson, James Brown and Robert Sorenson.

- Gretchen Lord Anderson, *Oakland-Cambridge Presbyterian Church, Cambridge*
- James Brown, *First Presbyterian Church, Lodi*
- Gary Diffee, *Christ Presbyterian Church, Madison*
- Robert Frykenberg, president, *Christ Presbyterian Church, Madison*
- Alice Honeywell, secretary, *Westminster Presbyterian Church, Madison*
- Ellen Montei, vice president, *Christ Presbyterian Church, Madison*
- Kirk Morledge, *First Presbyterian Church, Waunakee*
- Robert Sorenson, *Christ Presbyterian Church, Madison*
- Ralph Thomas, treasurer, *Westminster Presbyterian Church, Madison*

Pres House is a ministry of the Presbyterian Church, USA, and is operated by the Presbyterian Student Center Foundation.



THE VISION FOR THE FUTURE...A HOME FOR STUDENTS

Mark Elsdon, Campus Pastor

It is truly an exciting time here at Pres House! After a period of pause in active Presbyterian ministry we are embarking on an ambitious journey to recreate Pres House as a thriving home for the university community. This home involves two parts – a spiritual home and a physical, literal home. Erica’s story on the cover of this newsletter speaks to the importance of living with students who truly cared for her. She was blessed to live in an authentic community. Not all people are so fortunate. Supportive community is critical for spiritual, emotional, relational and intellectual growth. We are creating this kind of community through programs such as worship, small groups and mission activity AND by building a distinctive housing option for the campus.

We are proposing to construct a six-story apartment building on the

parking lot behind Pres House. The three- and four-bedroom apartments have two bathrooms and many have balconies. There will be about 45 units totaling over 150 bedrooms. Bedrooms will be rented as single or double rooms providing various options for students to choose from. The design of the building is extraordinary. It will be a beautiful



addition to Pres House and to the surrounding area and will enhance the University’s exciting plans to develop the area surrounding Pres House into a top notch arts and humanities

district. Our hope is to begin construction in the spring of 2006 and be open for the 2007-08 academic year. As part of the total project we will be restoring and renovating the existing heritage building. Our goal is to enhance the already striking beauty of the Pres House building and make it more useful for 21st century ministry programs.

The purpose of this project is twofold. One purpose is to provide a long-term and sustainable funding source for Pres House ministry. But the primary purpose is that we seek to offer a supportive home for students. Residents will have the opportunity to engage in high quality residential life programming that will foster authentic community and enhance their university experience. The atmosphere will encourage healthy living and be conducive to studying and learning.

Residents will also have easy and relaxed access to our full range of religious programs from worship services to discussion groups to mission trips and so on. Many apartment buildings around campus have laundry facilities and internet access (which we too will have), but none of this affords students the opportunity to engage in spiritual growth like this! ☚



The drawings on this page are the architects’ renderings of the housing project.

FALL 2005 STUDENT WORSHIP SERVICE

Pres House exists to be a witness to Jesus Christ on the University of Wisconsin–Madison campus. We are beginning new programming this fall to carry out that mission. We will be continuing a successful discussion group started last year, offering new small group options, engaging in mission and service within Madison and beyond, and drawing students together in meaningful fellowship.

The centerpiece of the new program at Pres House is a weekly Sunday afternoon worship gathering followed by a meal. We expect the service to grow organically by involving participants in all levels of planning and execution. Though it will include music, reading and explication of scripture, and the sacraments, it will also seek to be a place where people who wouldn't normally set

foot in a church will feel welcome, a sort of “non-church church.” We will be aware of not assuming people know what to do in worship, and to be careful of not creating a culture which demands people to conform to it before they can be a part of the community. We will be creative in worship, incorporating ancient traditions as well as trying new ways of worshipping. We hope to incorporate a wide variety of music (hymns and choruses, ethnic, student written, etc.) into worship. The service will be shaped by the community that comes together. Participants will have the opportunity to wrestle with what it means to worship God on this campus and risk exploring their own ideas about worship in a safe setting.

Please join us at 4:30 p.m. on Sundays starting September 4th in the chapel at Pres House! ☚



**PRES HOUSE
WORSHIP
SUNDAYS 4:30 P.M.
STARTING 9.4.05**

NEW LOGO TIES PAST AND FUTURE TOGETHER

We are thrilled to unveil our new logo. In a clear and striking way, it speaks of the rich history of Pres House while also pointing toward a bold and exciting future.

The centerpiece is a design taken from a window in the tower which is one of the most notable features of Pres House. In addition to being visually beautiful, the triplicate nature of the image reminds us of our foundation in the triune God. A roof-line has been added to conjure up the image of a church. The same roofline is also suggestive of a home – the physical and spiritual home Pres House is recreating.

No, the asymmetry is not a mistake; the roofline was intentionally left incomplete on the left side. This is to embody one of our core values

– we embrace change. Pres House, and campus ministry in general, is constantly changing so that the gospel may be embodied and embraced in each time and place.

We are undertaking the construction of a renewed ministry and a major building project. Both will be taking shape in the next few years... but the ministry is never complete. God is always inviting us anew to join in sharing Christ's love on the campus and in the world. ☚



**Go to
www.preshouse.org
for:**

- ◇ Building project updates and pictures.
- ◇ Pictures of student activities.
- ◇ Pres House Blog: a regular on-line reflection by the campus pastor.
- ◇ Read full addresses from the April 30 event by Erica Liu and Mark Elsdon.
- ◇ Read more about our history, vision and other ministries that call Pres House home.
- ◇ Sign-up for our e-newsletter.

MEET THE NEW PRES HOUSE STAFF

MARIAN HALLS
INTERN



I just completed my first year as a graduate student in comparative literature and am excited to join Pres House as a summer intern. Getting to know Madison has been the most recent step of a journey which has brought me to many new and interesting places.

I spent the first five years of my life in Brazil and then the next nine in Guatemala, where my parents partnered with nationals to build the church in Latin America. After moving with my family to northern California during high school, I later attended UCLA where I majored in ethnomusicology and comparative literature. Living in so many places has given me a high appreciation for many different kinds of people and ways of living in the world, and gradually becoming a part of the university culture has instilled in me an appreciation for deep and inquisitive thinking.

I look forward to bringing these life experiences to bear on my work at Pres House, where I will be connecting new students to our growing community and helping to form an inviting atmosphere for the wide variety of students and faculty on

our campus. I will also be leading a research group for graduate students to consider the question of how literature and theology are brought to bear on one another.

TED SCHMIDT
DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS
OPERATIONS



I am a native of the Madison area. I grew up in Lodi where I attended the Presbyterian church and Lodi High School. I received my BBA in finance from the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and during that time attended services held at the Pres House.

Upon graduation I moved to Chicago and worked at a consulting firm. After a few years of the excitement of a big city, I decided it was time to move back to the area of the country I love most, Madison. I started my own business as a computer network consultant and also started to invest in and renovate real estate. My most recent project was two office buildings on Madison's west side.

I began work with the Pres House in June 2005. I look forward to contributing my talents and entrepreneurial spirit to the mission of the Pres House and the building project that is an integral part of it. ☞

Send Us Your Students

Do any students from your church currently attend UW-Madison? Know any new students venturing off for the first time to the university experience in Madison? Help our staff warmly welcome your students with a free lunch or cup of coffee and acquaint them with the Pres House community. Send us the contact information of interested students and we will get in touch with them. Or have them drop by our building to say hello. (We are located on the State Street Mall across from Memorial Library.)

If your church youth worker or UW students would like to receive a Pres House welcome packet please contact Mark Elsdon, Campus Pastor (mark@preshouse.org or 608-257-1633) with the mailing address and the number of packets requested.

Get Pres House Updates

Do you want regular updates from Pres House? Consider signing up for our e-newsletter. We will send you email updates about the new building project, student programming and other Pres House news. Sign up at our website www.preshouse.org.

Partner with Pres House

We need God's help and yours—both your prayers and your financial support. We are grateful for your past prayers and monetary gifts; please consider contributing to this important student ministry. Send your contributions to Pres House at 731 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53703. All gifts are tax deductible.



PRES HOUSE

PRES HOUSE WITNESSES
TO JESUS CHRIST
AT THE HEART OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF
WISCONSIN-MADISON
CAMPUS, SERVING
THE UNIVERSITY
COMMUNITY AS A
MISSION OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
USA AND IN COOPERATION
WITH OTHER MINISTRIES.

Left: Pictures from the end of the year student barbecue.

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 Elisabeth Platt, Operations Manager
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 Ted Schmidt, Director of Business Operations
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 Erica Liu, Program Director
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 Mark Elsdon, Campus Pastor

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