



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

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Winter 2006

CONSTRUCTION IS  
UNDER WAY

*Reverend Mark Elsdon, Campus  
Pastor/Executive Director*

As I write this update, Stevens Construction is pouring concrete for the fourth floor of our new student housing facility. Since our groundbreaking ceremony on June 20, construction has been progressing fast and furiously. It began with the tearing up of our parking lot, digging a large hole and pouring concrete for an underground connection to the existing Pres House. We are right on schedule

to be completed in mid-July 2007 in time for 279 students to move in next August!

Since the groundbreaking, Pres House has been receiving a great deal



of media attention. Television, magazines, and newspapers—from California to New York, South Carolina to Michigan—have been running stories. National media including the *New York Times* and “CBS Evening News” with Katie Couric, have also publicized the project. The media attention seems to stem from an interest in the unique nature of the faith-based spiritual learning community we are seeking to create. One television story led off with the line, “A new dorm at UW-Madison encourages prayer.” While the dorm description is not completely accurate (the housing will be apartment-style living rather than a

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A STUDENT  
PERSPECTIVE

*Jonathan Thornhill*

Pres House has been an important part of my life since coming to UW-Madison. I’m now in the second year of studies that will lead to a Ph.D. in economics. Currently my interests are leading me to research in international, public, and health economics and to a career with an international organization that seeks to inform policy regarding effective and sustainable trade and development.

After a friend introduced me to Mark and Erica, I quickly found a community that provides a wel-

coming fellowship experience and encourages me to continue learning about my own faith and spirituality. The most important part of the Pres House experience for me is the friends that I have made because of it. As a graduate student it’s often difficult to balance the demands of academia and still find time to enjoy friends, meet new people, and have fun. So in addition to helping me learn more about my relationship with God, Pres House provides a social network that helps me get through academic or personal struggles. I recently joined the Pres House Board as a student member and have been serving on a student leadership team. Pres House continues to be a com-

munity that I am happy to call home, and I hope that through the faith, energy and hard work of its supporters, future students will call Pres House home as well. ☩



*Construction... continued from page 1*

typical dorm), the reporters got the prayer part right. We will encourage prayer in our housing facility.

Students do not need to be Christians to live in the new facility. They will not be required to participate in any programs or worship. Residents will, however, be encouraged to explore their faith and to grow spiritually. They will have the opportunity to discuss their faith in group settings, receive pastoral counseling, dialogue with each other, serve together, worship, and yes, pray. All of this will take place in a community guided by meaningful values. The values do not dictate behavior or function as a set of rules but rather provide a framework within which students can learn and grow.

A healthy, supportive, spiritually minded community located in a beautiful brand-new building in the very



heart of the campus is very attractive to both students and parents. Perhaps in part because of the media attention, we already have a growing list of students interested in signing up and we haven't even started leasing. But that is coming soon.

We are excited to have brought Chris Nabours on our team as our Director of Housing to begin leasing and managing the property. Chris works for College Park, a national property management company that will professionally and expertly manage the facility. Chris comes highly recommended for his property management expertise, but he also has a personal interest in this particular project. Chris is a committed Christian with some formative experiences in the Presbyterian Church. He believes in our mission to provide high quality housing that is more than just a place to sleep but is truly a unique spiritual home. ☩

For leasing info go to:  
[www.preshouse.org](http://www.preshouse.org)

## DEVOTION

*Reverend Erica Liu,  
Campus Pastor*

Here at Pres House, we have beautiful oak doors on the building. They are massive and not only add to the already striking beauty of the structure, but they also do a good job of securing the place! Every day people walk through the doors, some for the first time and some for the thousandth. When they come in, we hope they will discover the growing community of students who gather to learn about and worship Jesus Christ throughout the week. However, we do not expect that people who are searching will always find their way through the door at Pres House.

In the Gospel of Mark (Mark 2:1-4), there is a story about a paralytic man who had four very devoted friends. They had heard about Jesus and that he was in

town, so they decided to bring their paralyzed companion to him in the hopes that he might be healed. When they arrived at Jesus' home, such a crowd had gathered that they could not even get to the front door. Undaunted, this foursome climbed up onto the top of the house, dug a hole through the roof, and somehow managed to lower their paralyzed friend practically into Jesus' lap! It was well worth their effort as Jesus brought healing for both his body and soul. Their faith that Jesus could make a significant difference in their friend's life was so compelling that they found an unorthodox way of arranging an encounter.

As Christians we might be used to going to church each Sunday and gathering in fellowship with the community of faith. For those unfamiliar with Jesus though, walking through the door into a sanctuary is not always the best way for them to get acquainted. This year we have challenged the Pres House Team (a

group of students who have committed to serving the community) to get creative in building new "doors" into Pres House so that people who do not know Jesus might venture in. It is a challenge I think that is worth all of us considering in our own lives. What "doors" can we create to invite others in to meet Jesus? ☩



# ANNUAL REPORT FOR JULY 2005 - JUNE 2006

Reverend Mark Elsdon,  
Campus Pastor

## Worship

September 4, 2005, saw the first Pres House worship take place in the chapel in many years. Each Sunday at 4:30 p.m. students and community members gathered to worship Jesus Christ creatively through scripture, music, prayer and the Lord's Supper. Services were followed by intergenerational fellowship over dinners brought by local Presbyterian congregations.



## Small Groups

Small groups provided a place for students to share ideas, prayers, and concerns with each other in a more intimate setting. A weekly Faith Discussion Group met on Wednesday evenings as a safe place to talk about faith, politics, culture, ethics, theology, scripture and more. A Semester Sprint through the Bible met on Friday afternoons and covered, yes, the entire Bible in one semester!

## Outreach and Service

Putting faith into action is important, so the Pres House community



participated in the CROP walk for hunger and served a meal at a local homeless shelter. Over spring break eleven people went down to the Gulf Coast to help people rebuild their lives in partnership with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. Each week half of the offering collected at worship went to free people from forced prostitution and child slave labor through International Justice Mission.

## Fellowship

Christian community is fun. It is a place to develop lasting friendships. Students enjoyed spending time together at various social events during the year including a Pringle and Mingle, Root Beer Keg party, video game dance party, barbecue at the pastors' home and other spontaneous activities.

## Leadership Development

Each week throughout the year a group of students met to plan worship. They also participated as liturgists and musicians. At the end of the academic year a new group of nine students covenanted to serve together as a more formal Pres House Team. This team helps to shape and serve the community by planning retreats, mission trips, welcome events and other activities.

## So far this year...

In addition to the activities from last year which are continuing:

- A new music director, Hansi Bryan, joined the staff and put together an exciting new music team.
- Over 120 people attended a welcome barbecue picnic on the patio outside Pres House.



- A number of Pres House students served meals at the men's shelter at Grace Episcopal Church.

• Nineteen people attended the first annual two-day retreat near Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, to take a break from Madison and talk with UW-Madison Professor Doug Rouse about how faith intersects with academics and life.

- Nine area churches are now bringing meals for after Sunday worship (see list below).✠



## THANK YOU!

Pres House would like to thank the following churches for providing dinner after Sunday evening worship.

Christ Presbyterian Church, Madison  
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Madison  
Covenant Presbyterian Church, Madison  
Dale Heights Presbyterian Church, Madison

Caledonia Presbyterian Church, Portage

Presbyterian Church of Oakland-Cambridge  
First Presbyterian Church, Lodi  
First Presbyterian Church, Waunakee  
Union Presbyterian Church, Monroe

## IN REMEMBRANCE

**J**anice Reid Lower passed away at Attic Angel Place in Madison on September 30, 2006, at age 96. Many of you will remember fondly Rev. Dr. Cecil and Janice Lower, who served at Pres House (then University Presbyterian Church) from 1937 to 1951. Under their leadership, the all-student church grew to include three Sunday services where hundreds of students worshipped each week. Over the Lowers' fourteen-year ministry, thousands of students also enjoyed a broad range of social and service activities and developed leadership skills as they made Pres House their "home away from home." In 1951



"Doc" Lower accepted a faculty position at McCormick Seminary and later became pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Illinois. Soon after retiring to Madison in 1977, he passed away.

Mrs. Lower is survived by her daughters, JoAnn (Nelson) Buck and Beth Koetting; grandchildren Michael (Lois) Buck, Brad (Lorie) Lower, Becky Lower, Joshua (Robin) Koetting, Kate (Michael) Brimberry, and Elizabeth (Chad) Butler; seven grandchildren; sisters Dorothy Carter of Marshall, Mo., and Maxine Ohnstad of Madison. In addition to her husband, she was preceded in death by a son, Richard W. Lower.

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## LET'S RECONNECT

**A**fter searching the archives this past summer, we were able to find addresses and write to more than 1,000 people who had once attended programs at Pres House but with whom we had lost contact over the years. You may have recently received one of these "reconnect" letters along with an invitation to share your memories of Pres House. Thank you to those of you who have sent responses. If you have not sent yours in or you did not receive one, please do contact us. We would love to hear from you. We have enjoyed reading your fond memories of everything from choir to ping pong to sermons, Sunday suppers and social activism.

Here's a sampling of some of the memories you've shared:

*... many discussions in the Graduate Symposium, e.g. on vocation vs. profession ... encouragement and well-presented sermons of Reverend Cecil Lower ... John Barr playing 'Once to Every Man and Nation' as a quick march for the recessional ... returning as a [World War II] veteran, finding a welcome 'spot' on such a crowded campus ... classes, especially Jondrow's course on the names of Jesus ... everything at Pres House, especially the Sunday night suppers and programs ... playing bridge all day in the front windows ... studying in the big fireside room ... playing the Beatles White Album til all hours of the night ... being a ROOJAH ... feeding coal to the furnace ... stopping on a blustery day to enjoy a hot cup of tea, a cookie, and conversation there in the lounge. Saturday night parties were always a special place to go. Sundays were the best. A fun emcee might preside, or we might play a game or two before retiring to the chapel for Vesper services by candlelight. It was a lovely way to end the weekend.*

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## SAVE THE DATE!

PRES HOUSE 1907-2007 CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION  
UW ALUMNI WEEKEND, MAY 11-13, 2007

**A**s 2007 approaches, we are planning to celebrate the 1907 beginnings of the Presbyterian Church's ministry on the University of Wisconsin campus. Our century-long history is filled with both joys and challenges, but as you've seen in these pages, God's faithfulness continues and we are encouraged to see Pres House becoming home to students once again. Please save the May 11-13 weekend, make your travel arrangements, and plan to join us and your fellow alumni as we celebrate one hundred years of campus ministry, cherishing old memories and forming new ones. Special event planning is underway. Detailed information will follow.

## WHO IS THIS PERSON CALLING ME FROM PRES HOUSE?

It's Scott Braucht. He is responsible for fund development activities at Pres House. When he calls, here are three reasons to respond:

1. Pres House is growing and heading toward revival. We need your support.

2. Pres House needs assistance with programs and operational support so it can advance its ministry. We need your support.

3. Pres House itself is undergoing capital improvements and we are building a student residence that will improve its faith-based reach across the UW-Madison campus. We need your support.

Scott is an MBA graduate from the UW-Madison School of Business.



He is a member of Christ Presbyterian Church in Madison and serves as an elder. He grew up in Madison and prides himself in being a lifelong Presbyterian.

When he calls, please listen and learn more about all that is happening here. Please allow us to reconnect with you. It has already been a joy to speak with alumni and hear about their

past experiences at Pres House, and we would love hearing from others.

Our Annual Campaign goal this year is \$100,000. This money will go directly to funding ministry with students. We are also seeking to raise \$5 million through our "Making Pres House Home" capital campaign which will both advance our programming and fund much needed repairs to our 75-year-old heritage building.

Please support our annual campaign by returning the enclosed envelope with your gift. Please also prayerfully consider a gift to our capital campaign. Just check the box on the envelope that says, "I/We wish to receive information about participating in the 'Making Pres House Home' capital campaign" and Scott will contact you. We will be grateful.

**N**ew! Now you can support Pres House by giving on-line. See [www.preshouse.org/donate.](http://www.preshouse.org/donate.)

## PRES HOUSE DONORS ❖ JULY 1, 2005 – JUNE 30, 2006

### THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!

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Mary Jane Addison  
Cheryl & Christopher Anderson  
Gretchen Lord Anderson  
Thomas Barland  
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Pauline & R.E. Weaver  
Devi Wijaya  
Edmund Willis  
Curtis Wilson  
Mary Jane Wolff  
John Wyker

#### CHURCHES

Christ Presbyterian Church, Madison  
Covenant Presbyterian Church, Madison  
First Presbyterian Church, Decatur, Alabama  
First Presbyterian Church, Lodi  
First Presbyterian Church, Waunakee  
Indonesian Church of the Nazarene  
John Knox Presbytery  
Presbyterian Women's Circle  
Synod of Lakes & Prairies  
Westminster Presbyterian Church



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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