



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

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Fall 2008

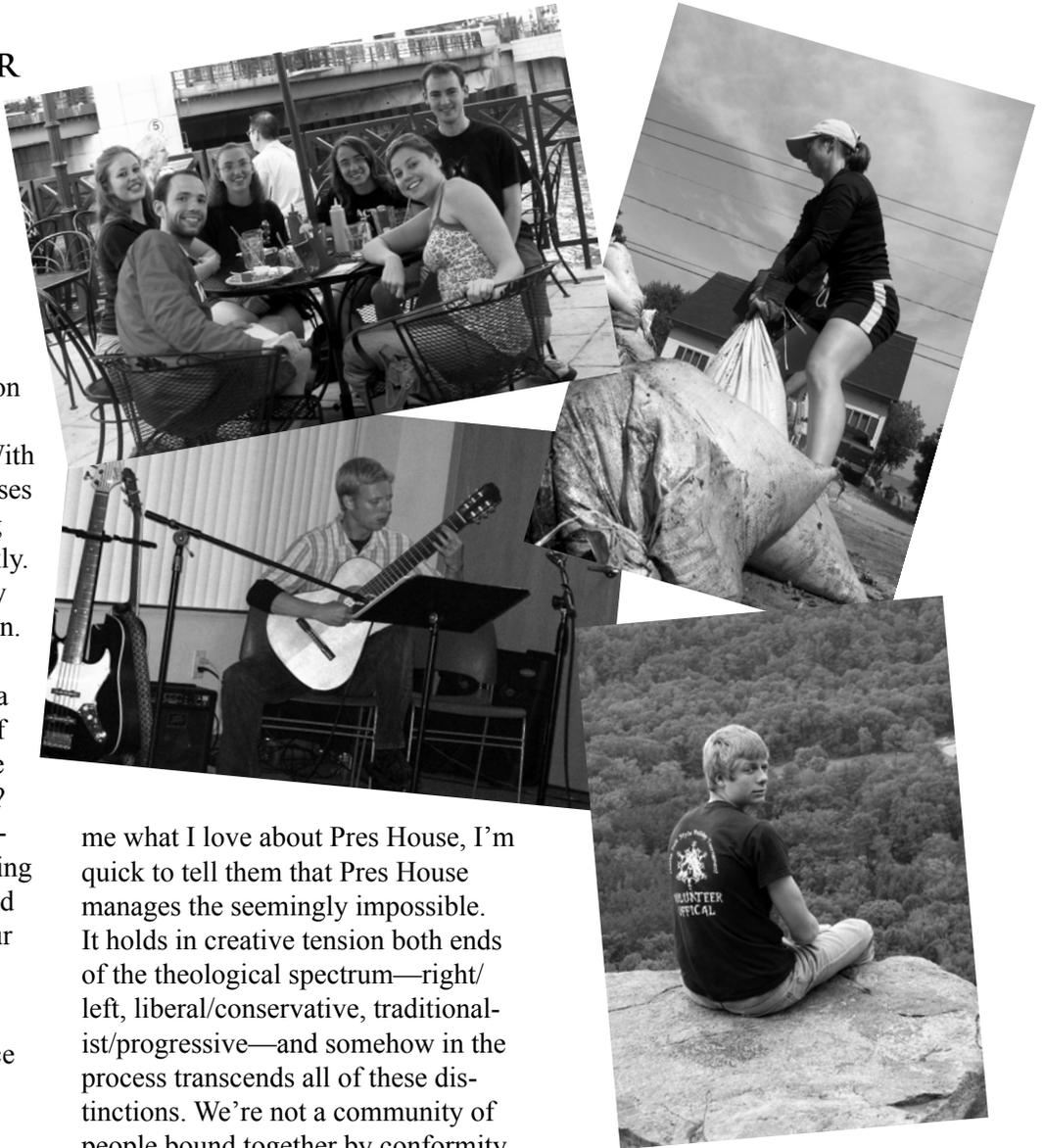
A STUDENT PERSPECTIVE: SUMMER AT PRES HOUSE

Jonathan Reid

Jonathan is a history graduate student and a student member of the board of directors.

Summer in Madison. Need I say more? Sailboats and sunsets. Concerts on the Square. Evenings on the Terrace. And the list continues. Ah, yes, life is good in Madison. With students returning to town and classes beginning, I find myself wondering how the season slipped by so quickly. Don't misunderstand me. I'm ready for the academic year to begin again. I look forward to the full spirit returning to the campus. I'm always a bit melancholy about the passing of another season, though. But change is natural. It's a sign of life, isn't it? We at Pres House have been changing, too. As always, we're busy trying to discover what Jesus' message and his call to community means for our lives.

This summer we inaugurated a Theology Discussion Group, a place where students, and graduate students, in particular, could gather to wrestle with the challenges of the Christian faith. Our individual and ever-widening experiences of God have no doubt shaped the substance of our discussions. As a result, we're not only maturing as people of faith, but also as a community, a microcosm of God's kingdom. When people ask



me what I love about Pres House, I'm quick to tell them that Pres House manages the seemingly impossible. It holds in creative tension both ends of the theological spectrum—right/left, liberal/conservative, traditionalist/progressive—and somehow in the process transcends all of these distinctions. We're not a community of people bound together by conformity of thought. No, we're bound together by something much stronger. Love. A steadfast commitment to "welcome one another," to use Paul's words, "just as Christ has welcomed [us]" is the foundation for our ministry on the

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*Top Row: Jonathan Reid (lower left) spends a day in Milwaukee with other Pres House students, a student assists with flood relief in Jefferson County
Bottom Row: a member of the Pres House community shares his musical abilities at an open mic night, a student takes in the beauty of Devil's Lake State Park*

Reid continued from page 1

UW campus (Rom. 15:7). As our conversation widens and deepens, I feel sure that God's grace will become ever clearer and, correspondingly, ever more brilliant.

Jesus served the world by addressing people's deepest needs. We, too, have been serving people this summer, meeting them at the place where a witness to hope is most needed. As many of you know, the Midwest endured devastating floods earlier this summer. A group from Pres House was able to help in the relief efforts near Busseyville, a small community just southeast of us in Jefferson County. Along with residents and other workers, we spent the better part of a day removing sandbags from previously flooded areas. It was satisfying if hard work.

Such opportunities are constant reminders that communities like ours don't exist for themselves. Christianity is a lifestyle, not a club. Are we prepared to be radical disciples of Jesus? If so, we must be willing to roll up our sleeves and witness to his life in our own. Pres House continues to maintain relationships with Porchlight's Drop-In Shelter and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's Food Pantry. Serving the clients of these agencies, which we were also able to do this summer, remains a source of enjoyment for our community. We

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.

rarely lack volunteers when our service days roll around.

We've also managed to reflect a bit on the beauty of life, on the joy of just being together. On several occasions, groups from Pres House made it to Madison's summer highlight—Concerts on the Square. Pres House folks have also taken day trips to Devil's Lake State Park and the Milwaukee Public Museum. Travis Agnew, our musician-in-residence, and his wife Amy have hosted a series of

open mic nights in Pridham Lounge. The open mic nights have been a perfect venue for showcasing Pres House's talent, and a talented bunch of people they are! All of these things have conspired to make this summer an unforgettable one for me. I'm sure other folks feel the same.

Yes, I'll say it again. Life is good in Madison. And, yes, it's good to be at Pres House! Come and see us. You're always welcome here. ☚



Rev. Huneycutt Vergeer shares communion during the reunion worship service.

PRES HOUSE HOSTS REUNION OF MINISTRY MEMBERS FROM 1991-1995

Nicole Schmidt, ministry alumni

Pres House hosted a reunion of twenty-five campus ministry alumni on Friday August 1, 2008. The group met together with the pastors from their era, Rev. Melicent Huneycutt Vergeer and Rev. Vern Visick. The hope was that the remembrance of wonderful years spent worshiping together would rekindle important connections. This certainly proved to be true! Members delighted in reconnecting and being able to worship together once more in the beautiful space of Pres House.

The reunion began with a worship service in the chapel led by

Rev. Meli. The focus of the service was Jesus' parable that the Kingdom of God is like the woman who spent time searching for the one lost coin. Pastor Meli's message discussed the importance of our uniqueness as well as the strength of our togetherness. After worship we gathered for fellowship and food in the lounge on the main level. Casual reconnections continued throughout the weekend, including brunch Saturday morning.

Members truly enjoyed gathering in the sacred place of Pres House again. We were so pleased to see all of the beautiful renovations that have taken place since we departed. It was truly a blessing to return to the place of great spiritual growth for many of us. May God continue to bless Pres House and all who worship there! ☚

CHURCHES SUPPORT TWO NEW PROGRAMS FOR 2008-09!

PRES HOUSE LIFE TOGETHER

Four students and our chaplain intern will be growing and serving together this year in a new and experimental program for the purpose of:

- Growing individually through intentional reflection, goal setting, and mentoring from pastoral staff.
- Developing trust and community together by experiencing and practicing hospitality. The program members all live in the Pres House Residence and will share regular meals, prayer, and worship together.
- Helping other students in the larger Residence and Worship community experience God's welcome and love by providing hospitality, serving as leaders, and modeling Christian community.

Funding for the program comes from Christ Presbyterian Church. Members of Christ Church are giving up to \$100,000 that will be matched by \$50,000 from the church endowment. Over half of that amount has already been given.



Members of the Pres House Life Together Program take time to build a "physical" representation of the home they want to create for students this year at Pres House.

PISTOIS: FAITHFUL IN MIND AND DEED..."

Pres House will have the vision of "Pistois: Faithful in mind and deed..." during the 2008-09 academic year. Pistois means "faithful" in Greek. The Pistois program strives to create a generation of students who are faithful to God by engaging in the world around them. This year-long program encourages students to live out Christ's calling to serve others by focusing on four core areas:

1. Growing in theological understanding of service through sermons, Bible studies, and discussion groups.
2. Growing in local and global awareness through field trips,

video screenings, and guest speakers.

3. Increasing student involvement in service opportunities. We hope to have students engage in 460 total service hours during the 2008-09 academic year.
4. Equipping student leaders to develop student-led initiatives that fall in the first three core areas.

The Pistois program is supported through a \$5,000 grant from the John N. Bergstrom Endowment Fund of First Presbyterian Church, Neenah, WI.

Pres House thanks all of our supporting churches for their generous funding that makes ministry at UW-Madison possible. ☩



RETIRED SCHOOL TEACHER JOINS CECIL AND JANICE LOWER LEGACY SOCIETY BY LEAVING PRES HOUSE IN HER WILL

"As a public school teacher for 42 years I have always been interested in education. I learned first about Pres House in 1954 when my nephew was a student at UW and he attended worship there. Much later I met Janice Lower at Attic Angels Retirement Community where we became close friends. She and her husband ministered to students at Pres House during the 1940s. Because of this historic place, its programs, and its people I have made provision in my will for Pres House to ensure the future of its educational and spiritual mission."

-Ms. Florence Branch, age 98

Join Ms. Branch as a member of the Cecil and Janice Lower Legacy Society by remembering Pres House in your will or estate plan. For more information contact Pres House at 608.257.1030.



Another academic year brings new students moving into the Pres House Residence. A pizza party and ice cream sundae extravaganza provided opportunities for neighbors to become friends.



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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