



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

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Spring 2009

## BREAK WITH A PURPOSE REFLECTION

By Travis Serebin

*Mr. Serebin just completed his first year at UW-Madison. He is studying political science and joining the Pres House Board in July.*

It was about 6:15 a.m. on Sunday, March 15, when I set out with my bags from the Lakeshore Dorms on my hike to Pres House. In the stillness and utter isolation of a pre-dawn spring break weekend here on campus, I had a lot of time to consider what exactly I was doing going on the Break With a Purpose to Heifer Ranch in Perryville, Arkansas. There was a fair amount of uncertainty, and possibly even anxiety, over what would transpire, but I was determined to dedicate myself to the week in the hope that I would come away with a different understanding of the world or at the very least learn something new about myself.

On our first morning at Heifer, we were sent through "Customs" and sorted according to our destinations. We spent the remainder of the week in family units from Mozambique, Tibet, and the Mississippi Delta region. In order to make the experience as genuine as possible, we lived in authentic dwellings, prepared meals appropriate to our region, and completed the necessary chores to support our families. I found myself



*Students and staff spent their spring break taking part in the Global Passport Program at Heifer Ranch in Perryville, Arkansas.*

immediately immersed in the experience when I was sorted into the poorest family in the Global Village. Our situation presented us with many challenges, but I ended up grateful for this fact because I feel like I was able to learn a lot from the adversity we encountered.

One important lesson that I gained from this experience is a greater understanding of community among people. When I shared with someone the remarkable way in which we had shared our resources, they offered me the phrase: "affluence is isolating." I'm not sure why those words had such an impact on me, but it seemed to explain why it is so easy, when we have a lot of things, to go home at

night, watch our own televisions, and eat by ourselves. With this westernized lifestyle, I think it can be hard for us to imagine whole communities working toward a common goal or comprehend how one family can "pass on the gift" of a pregnant animal to another and utterly transform their lives. Yet these are common stories that people at Heifer shared with us from their work around the world.

Ever since our week at Heifer, we have been brainstorming ways to adopt the concept of "passing on the gift" here at Pres House. So far, we have attempted to start composting the degradable waste from our

*Continued on page 2*

*Serebin continued from page 1*

kitchen and are raising money in the Pres House community to buy an animal through Heifer that will provide a family and village with a means to support itself. As for how the trip influenced me individually, that is still developing. I have yet to come to set conclusions on everything that happened, but I expect I will remember this experience and continue to use it over the years as my life changes as a sort of blueprint for how I should be living. That is the greatest thing that I will take away. ☚

*To see a team video made during the week and also listen to student reflections from the trip, visit the Pres House website: [www.preshouse.org/abt.video.bwap.cfm](http://www.preshouse.org/abt.video.bwap.cfm) and [www.preshouse.org/audio/bwap.2009.03.22.mp3](http://www.preshouse.org/audio/bwap.2009.03.22.mp3).*



*Students like Travis Serebin (left) learned about global poverty through their week at Heifer Ranch. They lived in native dwellings of impoverished groups throughout the world. They also cared for animals, cooked, and performed other domestic activities using the methods of individuals in those areas of the world. Since the trip, students raised \$282 to buy a water buffalo and a flock of ducks through Heifer.*



### **A Planned Gift Remembers the Past and Secures the Future**

I found early retirement a time to look back, to reassess, and to recall what was, what is now, and what is still important. I looked back at a thirty-plus year career in public education which was satisfying and great fun. Those years were woven with wonderful travel times, unusual employment opportunities, great friends, and exciting experiences to enjoy. I thought, "How did this happen?"

I credit my early childhood, which encouraged me to learn and excel, and which sent me, at age seventeen, from a tiny place in northeastern Wisconsin to Madison for my college education. Once arriving at the University, living at Liz Waters, and settling into my studies, Pres House quickly became a very significant part of my college experience. This was the place for the next four years that my faith was nurtured, my ideas were challenged and my vistas were broadened. My leadership skills were recognized and encouraged, social issues were pursued, and great friendships were developed. It was an exciting place in time.

Much has changed in fifty years—Pres House is not the same, University Presbyterian Church (where I was ordained a deacon and the students practiced churchmanship) is no more, and even the Murray Street parking lot is gone!

But the students at UW continue their journey to "sift and winnow," and Pres House continues to stand to meet their spiritual hopes, needs, and questions with the good news of the gospel. For that reason I choose to include the Presbyterian Student Center Foundation in my will in grateful remembrance of how significant the programs at 731 State Street were for this once young coed.

-Anne Dropp, BS'55, MS'68

Join Ms. Dropp 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.

## CHURCHES SUPPORT PRES HOUSE CAMPUS MINISTRY IN EXCITING WAYS

Each Sunday during the academic year, members of area churches sit down to share a home-cooked meal with Pres House students. These volunteers not only eat with the students but they have also spent many hours preparing the food and setting up the lounge. They provide a welcoming environment for students to continue fellowship after worship.

Churches also support Pres House by donating from their mission funds, special collections, and capital campaign funds.

Two churches that have supported Pres House generously this year using unique giving methods are Christ Presbyterian Church in Madison and First Presbyterian Church in Neenah.

Members of Christ Presbyterian Church are supporting Pres House through their "Making Pres House Home" giving campaign. For every two dollars the congregation raises the church will donate one dollar from the church's endowment. The funds raised thus far have supported the purchase of new lounge furniture and the Pres House Life

Together Program. This program gave four students and the chaplain intern the opportunity to grow spiritually through living together in community, sharing regular meals and prayer, and serving the Pres House community by planning events and providing hospitality.



The giving campaign continues through this year and so far over \$90,000 has been given to Pres House from the congregation and endowment, well on the way to a total contribution of \$150,000 for ministry at Pres House.

The Pistois Program was funded

by a grant of \$5,000 from First Presbyterian Church in Neenah. The church provides grants to non-profits through their John N. Bergstrom Endowment Fund. The Pistois Program was a year-long service emphasis that encouraged students to live out Christ's calling to serve others. Through small groups, sermons, awareness raising, and volunteer opportunities, the Pistois program challenged students to connect their faith with a passion for justice and service.

Kira Ault, a sophomore who participated in a small group says, "I really enjoyed my time with the Pistois group. Not only was I able to meet more students from Pres House, but the topics we covered were challenging to face. Our conversations forced me to look at the world in a different way. We tried to answer difficult questions such as, 'How does God want us to serve the world?' and 'What is true justice?' While we never came to any one conclusion, the group was a good eye-opener for me, and I am continuing to strive to see how God can work through me."

Pres House thanks *all* of the churches who support Pres House. Our church partners help us provide a place on campus where students encounter Jesus Christ. ☚

*Top: Members of Christ Presbyterian Church prepare dinner after worship, Bottom: The Pistois Justice Small Group.*

Our deep gratitude extends to the following churches who have hosted dinner on Sunday evenings. 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  
 Christ Presbyterian Church, Madison  
 Covenant Presbyterian Church, Madison  
 Dale Heights Presbyterian, Madison  
 First Presbyterian Church, Lodi  
 First Presbyterian Church, Waunakee  
 Holy Wisdom Monastery, Madison  
 Oakland Cambridge Presbyterian Church  
 Union Presbyterian Church, Monroe  
 Westminster Presbyterian Church, Madison

### 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.pres-house.org/donate](http://www.pres-house.org/donate).

## QUESTIONS OF LENT

By Sarah Orange

*Ms. Orange graduated in spring 2009 with a degree in economics. She was a participant in the Pres House Life Together program for the 2008–09 academic year.*

Some questions in life are simple (Would you like more ice cream? Yes.), but more often than not they are challenging, unpleasant, or without answer. However, questions serve an important purpose, regardless of difficulty, allowing for the identification and exploration of issues that frequently we would prefer to remain hidden.

Every Sunday, college students and community members meet at Pres House to worship. Over the Lenten season, the Pres House community

spent time considering the questions of the last week of Christ. One question studied was the response of the apostles when Jesus told them one would betray him. Each apostle replied, “Surely not I, Lord?” Another week, we explored Jesus’ cry of “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Both of these passages encouraged our community members to face difficult issues regarding our personal relationships with Christ and prompted the exploration of challenging faith issues.

Pres House is a unique place where



*Sarah Orange (top right) with other graduating students and departing worship staff as part of a commissioning and sending ceremony.*

question of all sorts are asked in a safe and open environment. Through worship services and a number of programs held throughout the year, the Pres House community tackles questions ranging from what the Christian community should do to protect the environment to topics of racial interaction. These opportunities provide the participants a chance to question and gain a better understanding of their faith.

Questioning is an important yet trying part of the faith experience. One of the things that attracted me to Pres House was that I was encouraged to examine my faith in an open and welcoming space. And yes, while all this questioning does bring uncertainty and sometimes frustration, it also allows for the opportunity to learn something about our faith.

As a graduating senior at UW–Madison I have had people asking me questions constantly for the past six months. Relatives inquire, “What are you going to do after graduation?” Parents ask, “How are you going to pay off all those student loans?” Potential employers demand to know, “Why are you right for this job?” All are questions that have no correct or simple answer. But by being forced to answer an uncomfortable question, sometimes, after the panic attacks and awkward pauses, we find an answer. ☩



*Tracy Nolan (center) plays the box drum with other worship musicians.*

## MAJOR GIFT ALLOWS MINISTRY EXPANSION

Pres House recently received a gift of \$25,000 to be used to hire a second chaplain intern for 2009–10.

The Chaplain Internship position builds upon our desire to develop future church leaders. The position is for a college or seminary graduate who is discerning a call to full-time ministry. The intern gains practical ministry experience along with mentoring opportunities by Madison-area ministry professionals.

The addition of a second intern allows us to increase ministry capacity. The interns live in the residence and assist with residence-life programming. The interns will also meet with students, lead small groups, participate in worship, and plan outreach activities.

Tracy Nolan, the current intern, has been an integral part of the ministry success over the past two years. Although we are sad to see her leave, we are pleased that she has decided to continue her education at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago beginning in August. ☩

## NEW BANNER SYMBOLIZES PRES HOUSE PAST AND FUTURE

By Tze Ruey Yeoh and Alice Honeywell

*Ms. Yeoh is a journalism and business student at UW–Madison and a member of the Pres House worshipping community. This article is an excerpt of a piece written for a course project. Ms. Honeywell is a current board member.*

On a seemingly calm Tuesday morning, a grayish neo-Gothic structure stands solemnly like a patriarch on the edge of State Street in downtown Madison. Behind its wooden doors, however, there is an ambiance of great excitement surrounding a colorful 16-foot banner to be displayed on the chapel wall. After some strategizing, a group of dedicated volunteers and Pres House staff, with the help of two 32-foot extension ladders, manage to hang it in a prominent place.

Pastor Mark Elsdon seems as ecstatic as a child watching a parade.

“This banner is a symbol of rebirth and rebuilding of a place that has gone through so much in its past,” he said.

The banner was designed and sewn by Wendy Robertson, an award-winning quilt artist. Two anonymous donors funded the project, and Robertson herself donated many hours of her time.

Alice Honeywell, a Pres House board member, points out a couple of sections in particular: “There are

pieces of the altar cloth from the 1940s sewn into the banner. Added to the new design elements, the various symbols graphically link to the faith of Pres House’s founders,” she said.

When the ministry restarted in 1999 and the neighboring apartment building rose next to the chapel, plans from the 1920s were discovered in Pres House’s archives that depicted the original dream of the founders: an entire “Presbyterian College at the University of Wisconsin,” complete with dormitories and classrooms.



*Top: The authors of the article. Bottom: Wendy Robertson shares about the creation of the banner at the dedication worship service on April 26, 2009.*

When the Great Depression hit, the founders had to modify their dream and abandon the housing part of their plans. A century later, their dream came true and the “campus” is now complete.

The reality of the economy and staffing needs are huge issues today. Just like any other nonprofit organization, Pres House depends on the

charity of others to fund their daily activities. “Giving has definitely decreased and it hinders the future developments that we intend to carry out here,” Co-pastor Erica Liu said. “The buildings are in place, but plans for ministry must continually be adjusted to stay within our budget. Funding is necessary to fulfill our mission and vision.”

Becky Schwei, a UW–Madison senior, has been attending the Pres House worship service since it first started and recognizes the need for a student community center at a public university.

“I really appreciate the student ministry on campus because it gave me a venue to discuss my thoughts and communicate with other students,” she said.

“We have residents who love joining our events, regardless of whether they are Presbyterian,” said Tracy Nolan. Nolan is Pres House’s chaplain intern, who lives in the residence and ministers to students both there and in the worshipping community.

The banner hanging from the chapel wall today depicts both the tradition of Pres House

as well as optimism for the future, and it forms the keystone of what its community really means. ☩

*To see color pictures of the banner visit the Pres House website: [www.preshouse.org/wor.banner.cfm](http://www.preshouse.org/wor.banner.cfm)*

## BELOVED FORMER PRES HOUSE PASTOR DIES



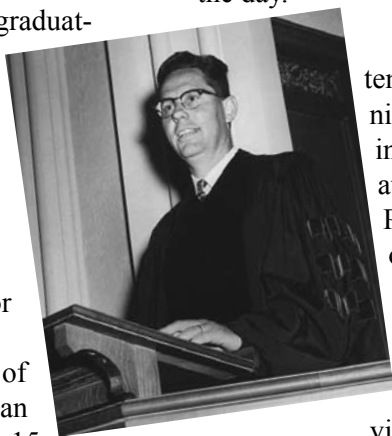
Rev. James Wilmoth Jondrow, 87, passed away in Raleigh, North Carolina, on May 12, 2009. He served as pastor at Pres House from 1955 to 1970. He was born in Spokane, Washington, and grew up in Berkeley, California. He graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, with a degree in electrical engineering and served as an Air Force captain. After graduating from San Francisco Theological Seminary, Jondrow went on to earn a doctorate in New Testament theology at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. The Jondrows lived in Madison for 42 years where Jondrow served as pastor-director of the University Presbyterian Church at Pres House for 15 years, then became an administrator of environmental research at the University. Among his broad interests were languages, photography, inland-lake sailing, and astronomy. He completed two novels in the last decade of his life. Jondrow had a life-long commitment to human rights, equality, and peace.

Hundreds of students at Pres House learned how to be thoughtful and

### Send Us Your Students

Do you know any students who currently attend UW–Madison? Know any new students venturing off for the first time to the university experience in Madison this fall? Help our staff warmly welcome them with a free lunch or cup of coffee and acquaint them with the Pres House community. Give Pastor Mark Elsdon the contact information of interested students and we will get in touch with them (mark@preshouse.org or 608.216.7312).

faithful leaders through Jondrow's mentoring and encouragement. He was known for his skill in teaching, his excellent preaching, and for sharing his passion for peace and justice with students. He led service trips to areas around the country, including Mississippi and Colorado—driving the students down in his own station wagon. He led Pres House through the turbulent 60s on campus and provided the community at Pres House with a theological and biblical framework with which to interpret the issues of the day.



The Jondrow's attended the 100-Year anniversary of Pres House in 2007. He commented at the celebration that Pres House was "one of the finest churches I have ever been near." Pres House was immeasurably blessed by Jondrow's service to students at UW–Madison and the integral role he played in Pres House history.

He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Marjean Pettis Jondrow, four children, and eight grandchildren. His children remember their time at Pres House serving as "surrogate little brothers and sisters" to the college students who were away from home for the first time.

Memorials may be given to Pres House in honor of Rev. Jondrow to help students today learn about justice and caring for the world by engaging in service activities and the annual Spring Break with a Purpose trip. Memorials may also be given to Sun in My Heart Vietnamese Children's Fund, c/o Kim McClusky, 13431 Bear Paw Trail, Ely MN 55731. Gifts go entirely into projects for the children. ☞

*Jondrow's full comments from the 100-Year Celebration can be viewed at the Pres House website: [www.preshouse.org/abt.centennial.cfm](http://www.preshouse.org/abt.centennial.cfm).*

## Alumni Remember

### Rev. James Jondrow

"Jim Jondrow was an important element in grounding my life of faith. As a person returning to my faith in graduate school, Jim was a great preacher and excellent model for me. The fact that he had started life as an engineer, and only went to seminary after World War II impressed me, as well. I particularly remember his talking about vulnerability as an important element of one's faith in God. That has served me well throughout my life."

-Rolf Hahne, PhD '64

"Jim Jondrow and his wife had amazing influences in my life. He gave interesting and eloquent sermons from which we could draw upon our own previous 'sermon experience' and glean what churches in the 1950's were like and what they could be like."

-Marilyn Bryan Soulen, BS '58, MS '59

"Jim Jondrow was a wonderful mix of warm humanity and a kind of scholarship that gave his parishioners a depth of understanding of scripture and worship that I have not encountered since. He also was one of the two pastors who officiated at our wedding, and he baptized our daughter Karen. We still treasure memories of activities we could share with him and Marjean during the years we all lived in Madison, especially our mutual love of birding."

-Tom Soulen, BA '57, PhD '63

"Rev. Jondrow created a safe and loving environment for us to practice our faith and understand what it meant to be Presbyterian. He married us on December 20, 1958. He baptized all three of our children. He entertained us in his home and gave freely of his time and grace. He was a true witness to God's love."

-Patrick, BS '62 and Susan Morrissey, BS '71

## STRATEGIC PLAN RESULTS – EXCITING NEW INITIATIVES!

*By Mark Elsdon, Campus Co-pastor and Executive Director; Erica Liu, Campus Co-pastor; Thomas Schwei, Board President*

When a student walks into Library Mall he or she will know not only that there are books in Memorial Library and ice cream in the Union but that there is a vibrant worshipping community and unique physical and spiritual home in Pres House.

When students move into the Pres House Residence they will experience an apartment that is much more than just a place to sleep, but rather a series of communities with real meaning and purpose.

When a student graduates from UW–Madison and makes his or her way into the world, that person will bring leadership skills into the workplace, communities, and churches that were developed and encouraged at Pres House.

These are three dreams, goals, and initiatives that, by God’s grace, we here at Pres House are seeking to realize. They are a significant part of the outcome of the Pres House strategic planning process of 2008-09.

After reviving the worshipping community, building student housing, and strengthening the organization of Pres House during the past five years, the Board of Directors and staff at Pres House felt it was important to discern and develop an updated strategic plan for Pres House.

As part of the process, we conducted an organizational assessment, reviewed the national landscape of campus ministry, assessed the needs and characteristics of today’s university students, and developed a vision for future ministry at Pres House. The data gathering process included academic research; a critical look at current Pres House resources and needs;

a survey of current Pres House participants; a survey of current UW–Madison students who have never been part of Pres House; a survey of Pres House alumni, donors, and supporters; and focus groups with current Pres House participants. The Board met for three retreats in addition to regular meetings to process the information gathered and prayerfully plan for the future. What came out of the process were three core initiatives:



1. Increase visibility and awareness of Pres House on campus: Through increased outreach to the campus and churches we seek to promote the visibility of Pres House on campus so that students know that they are welcome and that there are great things going on at Pres House.
2. Expand student leadership opportunities: By providing increased leadership opportunities and training we seek to develop thoughtful, faithful leaders for society and the church.
3. Develop greater ministry in the residential community: Through the creative use of our very unique residential ministry we seek to provide a meaningful and supportive home for students, primarily by exploring the idea of creating focused communities to serve students in specific areas of need.

Even though the strategic planning process was just completed in spring 2009 we have made exciting progress in a number of these areas already. Some highlights include:

- Beginning in July there will be six student directors serving as full voting members of the Pres House Board of Directors. This is an increase from zero student directors in 2005 and a doubling from 2008. In addition, eleven students will be serving on a newly created Pres House Council that will shape and guide the program ministry.
- Pres House has already received a major donation of \$25,000 from an individual in response to our strategic plan. This donation is to fund expanding our very successful Chaplain Intern program by adding a second intern. The second Chaplain Intern will contribute significantly to helping us achieve all three of our strategic plan initiatives.
- We have been in conversation with faculty and others to explore some very exciting new programs for the Residence that may include visiting scholars in residence and intentional communities for recovering alcoholic students, returning veterans, peer ministers, interfaith dialogue, and other areas.

These new initiatives will not replace the already growing ministry at Pres House that includes weekly worship, small groups, retreats, service activities, trips, and residence ministry. However, we are committed to the focus that this strategic plan provides and have implemented new processes and task forces to maintain a committed effort in these areas as we move into the future. If you have additional questions about the plan or about anything we are doing at Pres House, we invite you to contact us. ☞



*A group of students, board members, and staff braved wind and rain to run in the 8K Crazy Legs Classic that supports UW–Madison Athletics.*

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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