



A Home at the Heart of the University of Wisconsin–Madison since 1907

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Fall 2010

GOD IS ON THE MOVE

Attendance at Pres House's Sunday worship is up more than 50 percent from last year.

We are averaging 70 worshipers this year as opposed to 44 in the 2009–10 school year. Considering that no one was worshipping at Pres House as recently as the Spring of 2005, this is a significant number.

To accommodate the increased number we already have in the worshipping community, we now have five small groups meeting each week. Last year we had three.

Also, the apartments are 100 percent occupied and 120 of the 236 occupants came to the welcome event put on by our resident college chaplain intern.

Moreover, 13 residents are part of the Fellowship, a group of students actively engaging in program events that build community and reinforce "Pres House Residence Values."

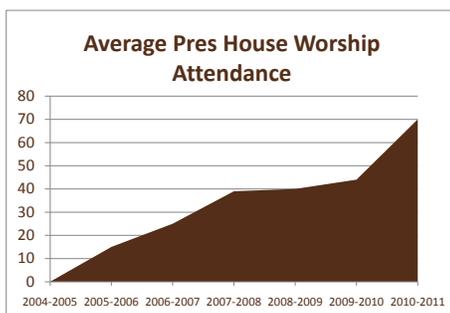


Photo by Music Director Michael W. Hillestad.

Campus Co-Pastor Erica Liu and 2009-2011 Chaplain Intern Christy Strickland decorated an apartment resident's door as payback for leaving a Brett Farve memento at a Christmas white elephant gift exchange.

DISCOVER OUR "HIDDEN" MINISTRY

By Erica Liu
Campus Co-Pastor

Rev. Liu has primary responsibility for the internship program — recruiting, selecting and then supervising interns.

Many people are familiar with the story of Moses and his encounter with the burning bush. A shepherd by default, Moses was leading his flock through the wilderness when a bush on fire caught his curiosity. Little did he know that his decision to take a closer look would forever change the vocational trajectory of his life. At first Moses was in awe of the phenomenon he was seeing—a

burning bush that was not consumed! Then fear arose when he realized that this was not just a novel event, but that God was actually speaking directly to him. When he learned the plans that God had in store for him—to go lead the Israelites out of Egypt—Moses wondered aloud why he had been picked for this particular task. As the realization began to sink in that this was a much bigger job than tending sheep, he tried to turn the job offer down and asked God to choose someone else. Finally, after being unable to dodge God's calling upon his life, Moses reluctantly

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PRES HOUSE INTERNS EXPLORE WHAT THEY WANT TO DO WITH THEIR LIVES

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agreed to go as God led him.

WRESTLING WITH CALLS

I love this story of Moses wrestling with his vocation. It is rare for most people to receive such direct signs and instructions from God about what they are to do with their lives, but the fear and wonder, hemming and hawing, and general confusion that accompanies Moses' discernment process is fairly common among young adults. Trying to figure out what you're going to do with your life can be quite an overwhelming and daunting journey! Exploring vocation is something that is especially important during the young adult years and a journey in which the community at Pres House delights in taking.

One of the specific ways Pres House does this is through the College Chaplain Internship program. Each year a young adult lives on site in the Pres House Apartments and

THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM AT PRES HOUSE GIVES YOUNG ADULTS THE CHANCE TO DISCERN IF GOD IS CALLING THEM TO BECOME PASTORS; IT ALSO EQUIPS THEM AS LEADERS IN THE CHURCH REGARDLESS OF THE TYPE OF MINISTRY THEY END UP DOING, WHETHER AS AN ORDAINED MINISTER, TEACHER, OR BUSINESSPERSON.

commits to learning, growing, and serving in ministry as the College Chaplain Intern. As a full-time staff member, he or she has the opportunity to consider if and how full-time ministry fits into their vocational calling. Through supervised practice of ministry, the intern is given space to reflect upon his or her own calling and given tools to become an effective minister.

A vocation in ministry can bring about many different responses—

curiosity, wonder, awe, fear, denial, reluctance, excitement—all in one person and sometimes in the same day! The internship program at Pres House gives young adults the chance to discern if God is calling them to become pastors; it also equips them as leaders in the church regardless of the type of ministry they end up doing, whether as an ordained minister, teacher, or businessperson.

LEARN ABOUT 3 INTERNS

As you read more about each of the three interns touched by the College Chaplain Intern program at Pres House, you will discover their unique experiences and gifts. Each of their stories and vocation is distinctive and yet all have experienced the wonder of God's call in their lives. We are grateful for the faithful supporters of Pres House who allow us to create space for the young Moseses out there to explore whether God is calling them to consider a vocation in full-time ministry.



Photo by Campus Co-Pastor Mark Elsdon

2007-2009 Chaplain Intern Tracy Nolan (right), now a seminary student, and Pres House member Alicia Powers both went on Pres House's 2009 Break With A Purpose trip to Heifer Ranch in Arkansas.

NOLAN WANTED TO BE SURE MINISTRY WAS HER PATH

By Tracy Nolan

Ms. Nolan was Pres House's first full-time Chaplain Intern. She is now a second-year seminary student at McCormick Seminary in Chicago.

I was blessed to spend two years as a Chaplain Intern at Pres House, from 2007-2009. I traveled from home in Pennsylvania to Madison and moved into what was then the newly built and still completely empty Pres House Residence. I was the first Chaplain Intern, and so had both the challenge and the gift of shaping the internship and program. I can't articulate just how thankful I am for my time at Pres House.

Before I came to Pres House, I had just graduated from St. Olaf College with a double major in Religion and Exercise Science. I had done a few urban ministry internships during my college time and was thinking I would head to seminary next—but I wanted to work in full-time ministry to get a sense of what ministry was all about and make sure that it was where I should be headed. I ended up at Pres House, a place where I quickly found that the mission and life of the community felt like a perfect match. It felt like home.

Pres House was exactly where I needed to be in my two years after

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*Photo by Pres House Member Ken Huxtable
Chaplain Intern Tracy Nolan (right) took a group of Pres House members, including (l-r) Benjamin Fortin, Joel Thomas and Sara Pridham shown here, to a Brewers game in Milwaukee just before she left for McCormick Seminary in Chicago in August 2009.*

SHE LEARNED IT WAS FOR HER

Nolan - Continued from page 2

undergraduate school. The community of students and staff shaped my experience. The wonderful familial atmosphere among staff was a source of growth. The Pres House community became very much my home in my time in Madison. Mark and Erica were great mentors to me and taught me much about ministry and pastoral care, and especially about self-care.

I had great opportunities to follow two of my passions —pastoral care and outreach — both in the residence and in the worship community. I was also able to plan events, preach in worship, drum in worship services, lead small groups and service trips, and more. I was able to experience ministry just as I had hoped. And it felt right. It seemed like a call, and so seminary was the clear next step. I am still journeying in my discernment of what denomination will become my home, but I have started the seminary journey.

ON TO SEMINARY

I am now starting my second year in the Master of Divinity program at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. (Even my attendance at McCormick was largely due to my

time at Pres House, as multiple Pres House board members and community members introduced me to it!) I just finished a summer completing one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education, working as a chaplain at a retirement community in Chicago. Through both of these experiences, I have realized more and more how my time at Pres House taught me about myself and truly shaped me.

PH STILL AN INFLUENCE

Pres House learning about self-care, in particular, has immensely informed my seminary experience. Though I constantly fight my temptations to be over-involved and over-responsible, I have taken the priority

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of self-care with me to McCormick and credit that priority directly to Erica and Mark’s mentoring. Both Erica and Mark helped me realize the importance of having spaces where I could be cared for while I was caring for others in ministry elsewhere. I have also realized the greater sense of self that Pres House grew in me — something that is hard to describe, but is a strong sense of self-understanding that I have recognized amidst classes and involvement at McCormick. This sense of self is likely tied to my experience doing pastoral care at Pres House — a passion that was affirmed and encouraged at Pres House. I learned a lot through individual one-on-one meetings with students and reflection on these times with Erica, and I carry those insights with me into my relationships and self-awareness at seminary.

So much of my understanding of what it means to do pastoral care was informed by my time at Pres House — certainly an understanding that I will continue to carry with me into my future ministry.

I will always think of Pres House and the community there very warmly; there, I found friends and colleagues that I hope will remain for life. A part of my self, my growth, and my understanding of ministry will always be informed by my time at Pres House. Thank you for making that possible for me and for many other interns to come —and thank you to the Pres House community for being such an important place and family in my life.

SEMINARY GRAD TRIES DREAM JOB

By Sarah Iliff McGill

Rev. McGill had already graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary when she became one of two full-time interns at Pres House in 2009–10.

When I first read the job description of Pres House College Chaplain intern I was very excited about the possibility of spending a year working with college students. My own college experience included a strong involvement in campus ministries at Augustana College. The support I felt from my own time with campus ministry guided me to go to Seminary. In Seminary, I worked with Princeton undergraduates and that confirmed in me my deep love for young people seeking after God. As I sought out a place for myself in the world after Seminary, I realized there are very few careers or opportunities in campus ministry in the Presbyterian world. Pres House was like a lighthouse calling me to Madison, Wisconsin, where I would get the privilege of working with young adults.

ONCE SHE GOT HERE

I was a Pres House college chaplain intern for the year 2009-2010. The experience was an enlightening and unique ministry opportunity that I was able to have after I graduated from Princeton Seminary. I have a passion for young people and I am always excited to talk with people seeking a relationship with God. At Pres House, I was able to be a part of the lives of college students as they explored their faith and identity. This took form in a variety of ways. Coffee dates, game nights, music, running groups, Bible study, small groups, retreats, service, worship, eating, learning, and making cookies are a few examples of the ways that interns



Photo by Chaplain Intern Christy Strickland.

Chaplain Intern Sarah Iliff (now McGill — she married a fellow Princeton Theological Seminary Grad in August) hammed it up on Pres House's 2010 Break With A Purpose trip to the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota

build relationships. We helped create a safe space for the students to ask questions and develop spiritually. Interns make themselves available to students and hopefully the students know that the Pres House staff is there for them and everyone wants to encourage their faith journey. I even had conversations about spirituality over Facebook and Twitter.

One unique aspect of Pres House was that I was able to be hands-on with the outreach to the students. The apartment building provided a different door for students who would never walk

I HAD MANY CONVERSATIONS WITH STUDENTS ABOUT GOD WHO AT FIRST TOLD ME "NOW, JUST SO YOU KNOW, I AM NOT RELIGIOUS."

into the church building. I lived in the apartment and over the year experienced many impromptu visits from students. Sitting in the lobby with candy and working on a computer also provided students an opportunity for me to meet them and offer them support. I had many conversations with students about God who at first told me "Now, just so you know, I am not religious."

I am in deep gratitude for the supporters of Pres House. As the intern I got to see the depth of effort it takes from all the surrounding churches to support young adults in their faith journey. Without the love, support, food, and prayers from the people and churches in Wisconsin, Pres House could not exist. I am grateful to the undercurrents of ministry that keep young people afloat even when they are unknown.

YOUTH PASTOR NOW

I was ordained in September as the Associate Pastor of Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church in Oak Park, IL. I learned a lot about ministry and myself in the year I spent at Pres House that will help me be a better pastor. One of my main ministries at Fair Oaks is leading the Youth Group and teaching confirmation. The variety of values I practiced at Pres House like ministry tools, encouragement for student leadership, and emphasis on community building will be values that I expect to carry into the new ministry opportunities I have at Fair Oaks. Wherever I am I hope to spread the message of God's love and grace and I will never forget the experiences I had at Pres House that helped me learn how to do that better.

STRICKLAND FOUGHT BUT GOD GRABBED HER

By Christy Strickland

Ms. Strickland is in her second year as a Pres House College Chaplain Intern.

The short version of the journey I've been on and what has brought me to this point: I grew up right outside of Atlanta and went to college at the University of Georgia. While I was there, I developed a passionate interest in issues of social justice, and I studied sociology intending to learn everything I could about systems of oppression in the world and what could be done to turn them around.

More important than what I was learning in classrooms is what I was learning about God and myself during that time. I spent each summer of college working at a summer camp, where I met people who, over time, changed my understanding of what it meant to be a Christian. When they first met me, I was jaded and cynical and unwilling to accept God's grace for myself, but these friends remained loving and patient as I slowly opened my heart to God and grew to know myself as loved and created in a beautiful image.

ACTING ON HER BELIEFS

As I left college, I was unsure of what to do or where to go next, but I was able to recognize a deep desire in my heart to care for God's people (all people) and to get out of my comfort zone. I was fortunate to be



Photo by Pres House member Cody Hanson (L-R) Alyssa Hopkins, 2009-2011 Chaplain Intern Christy Strickland, Cassie VonAlst, and Haley Christensen were among the 100 students and staff on the Pres House patio to hear President Obama's Library Mall speech Sept. 28, 2010.

offered an internship in North Carolina that allowed me to spend a year working in a nonprofit and exploring where faith and social justice intersect.

BEGINNING TO WRESTLE

Toward the end of the program in North Carolina, I happened across a posting for the job of "College Chaplain Intern" at Pres House. I can only say that when I read the description for the position, I felt like someone had reached out and grabbed me. There were no real "logical" reasons for pursuing this particular position – I had never even been to the Midwest, I didn't want to be a pastor, I didn't know anyone who lived in the entire state of Wisconsin. But I knew that God was telling me "GO," and as the doors continued to open up to me, I continued to take steps in faith and walk through those doors.

So I found myself living in Madison, and doing full-time campus ministry, being led and shaped by Mark and Erica. My experience of discerning what and where I was called to personally weighed very heavily on me from the beginning of my time at Pres House. Although I had denied feeling called to pastoral ministry to just about anyone who would listen, I was very conflicted and thought about what being a pastor might mean nearly every day. I had the chance to preach the sermon in several worship services, something I never thought I would do – and was truly shocked by how much I enjoyed that experience.

ACCEPTING HER CALL

Finally, after "dancing around the burning bush," as Erica so perfectly put it, I acknowledged to myself and to my mentors, Mark and Erica, that I was experiencing a sense of call to pastoral ministry, and for the first time said, "I think I might want to be a pastor."

I will be the College Chaplain Intern at Pres House until August of 2011. During this time I will be applying to theological schools and continuing to listen for God's voice speaking to my life. I'm grateful for the privilege I have of walking with students through their experiences and being able to explore my own vocation in an environment where I am both loved and challenged at each turn.

WILL YOU HELP FUND THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM?

Pres House supports this ministry through its general operating fund. It had two interns during the 2009-2010 school year only because Cheryl Shult of Madison gave \$25,000 specifically earmarked for support of the program. As she said, "It has been a great joy for me to financially support the Intern Program at Pres House. I'm passionate about equipping people to discern and live out their vocations. It's a gift

to me to support Pres House interns who care and nurture others as they seek clarity on how God calls them to use their unique pattern of strengths in service to this world which God so deeply loves."

Please consider joining this donor by contributing to this cause. An intern costs Pres House \$36,000 per year. A contribution of any size would be appreciated.

NEW ORGAN DEDICATED

By Carol Towers Toussaint

Mrs. Toussaint was on the Pres House staff in 1952–53. She and John Toussaint were married at Pres House in 1953. John, who sang in the combined alumni-student choir at the organ dedication, was an organist at Pres House in his student days. The Toussaints have been vitally involved in the Music and Worship Enhancement fund drive this year.

Working from the premise that you didn't have to be there to enjoy the moment, I'll try to convey the excitement and spirit in the Pres House Chapel on Sunday, October 10. This was the regular service for those who make Pres House their worship community with a warm welcome to those of us who have memories of worship and music in that beautiful space.

The occasion was the dedication of the new organ that uses the original Pres House organ pipes as well as new digital stops. The precise description is that it is a "104 stop Rodger's Trillium Masterpiece Series hybrid organ" and it draws from over 2,000 digital sounds stored in its memory. As one person said, "I know I have heard organs that have a flute stop. This time I really thought I was hearing a flute!"

Music Director Michael W. Hillestad prepared special music to introduce us to the new instrument and invited Chelsae Lodge (trumpet), Will Ault (clarinet), and Peter Carroll (cello) to join him in the prelude. The Pres House choir of 30 alums and students rehearsed earlier in the afternoon for their participation in the service. They sang the Vaughan Williams arrangement of the "Old Hundredth Psalm Tune" and led us in singing the Pres House hymn familiar to many in the chapel.



Photo by Pres House Member Haley Christensen

More than 100 people were at Pres House for worship on Sunday October 10, including regular members of the student community, alumni, donors and friends.

"GLEE" LED TO CHUCKLE

Mark Elsdon, Campus Co-Pastor, chose Acts 9:15 as his text and, with the Powerpoint that is used for hymn texts throughout the service, began by sharing a drawing that he said depicted that old proverb, "You Can't Teach an Old Dog New Tricks." He later shared a video clip from "Glee." I guess you'll have to take my word that it fit right in with the text. As we reflected with Mark on how Saul became Paul we were helped with other ways of looking for what Jesus has in store for any of us. We are given opportunities to learn "new tricks" and helped to new ways of being. As with the gift of the organ being dedicated to service for years to come, each of us can be a transformed instrument to God's glory.

Communion is served each Sunday at this service, and "Be Thou My Vi-

sion" was a wonderful accompaniment to this experience. Other hymns of praise included "Crown Him with Many Crowns" and "Praise to the Lord." Whether someone was attending the service for the first time or reminiscing about a special time 50+ years ago, each voice lifted in praise had much in common to sing about and be grateful.

ROCKING THE RAFTERS

Remember, I said you didn't have to be there? I was wrong. There is no way I can describe the final hymn, "I'll Fly Away." Michael moved to the piano and was joined by Peter Carroll (bass), Will Ault (drums) and Kaitlyn Skalet (vocalist). With their musical leadership we were lifted in spirit and thanksgiving as this special service closed.



Photo by Pres House Member Haley Christensen
Music Director Michael W. Hillestad conducted the 30-member strong alumni-student choir from his seat at the new organ that was dedicated during Sunday worship October 10.

\$1,090 TO GO

With the \$1,010 donated on Oct. 10, the Worship and Music Enhancement Campaign has nearly reached its \$125,000 goal. You could make the difference!

Please consider joining those who are bringing life back to the Pres House Chapel by giving to this fund.

PRES HOUSE WAS AT THE HEART OF IT ALL

Tuesday, September 28 was an exciting day at Pres House! The reason is that the President of the United States, Barack Obama, spoke to a crowd of more than 26,000 right in front of Pres House, on Library Mall, just steps away from our building.

We first heard rumors that President Obama was coming to speak on Library Mall from our mail carrier. Then, on the Thursday preceding his visit, we were contacted by the Chancellor's Office of the University and told that the Pres House chapel building was going to be located inside the official secured event area and that the Secret Service would be contacting us shortly.

On Friday morning Pres House staff met with the Secret Service to discuss the details of the event. Conversations continued with them over the weekend and into Monday and Tuesday. Because Pres House looks directly out onto Library Mall and onto the very spot where President Obama was going to be speaking, the Secret Service was very interested in security within Pres House.

PRIVATE AREA ALLOWED

They requested permission to post agents in the building and we granted it. They were not only interested in getting our help, however, but were also very willing to work with us to make the day smooth for our staff and students. The Secret Service agreed to provide a private entrance to the event for 100 ticketed Pres House-affiliated people. They further agreed that we could host a "private gathering" of students and others on our patio looking out over the stage where the President would speak from.

As the big day drew closer, excitement on campus grew. The 100 tickets we had available for students were quickly snatched up. We learned that Pres House board member Rev. Nancy Enderle had been asked to give the invocation for the event. We were also



Photos by Campus Co-Pastor Mark Elsdon
President Obama waving toward the crowd of Pres House students and staff at the "private gathering" on the chapel building patio.

asked to arrange for Kaitlyn Skalet, Pres House choir member and vocalist in the Sunday worship praise band, to sing the national anthem! She was thrilled!

OUR STARS SHONE

On Tuesday morning the mall was bustling with activity. Nancy and Kaitlyn practiced their parts and other Pres House students later reported they could hear Kaitlyn's beautiful singing all over campus! At noon the Secret Service closed down the mall in order to begin security sweeps. The mall was never so silent as during those two hours. At 3pm gates opened for the event and the private Pres House entrance was also opened. Those who got a ticket were very grateful. The regular line stretched for more than a mile through campus.

The rest of the afternoon and evening was full of music and various speeches by politicians and students. Nancy and Kaitlyn did an excellent job in their respective roles. The Pres House patio was a perfect place to watch from when President Obama made his entrance just a few minutes after 6 pm. His visit was the first time a sitting President had spoken on the UW-Madison campus in over 50 years. The students of Pres House were well positioned to witness this historic event. Pres House is truly in the heart of campus — where it all happens!

While Pres House welcomed our nation's President, Pres House does not endorse any particular political party or candidate.



Photos by Campus Co-Pastor Mark Elsdon
Pres House member Kaitlyn Skalet, above, doing a sound check Tuesday morning on the Library Mall stage where, several hours later, she sang the National Anthem as part of President Obama's Rally. Pres House Board Member Rev. Nancy Enderle and a White House staffer, below, did their sound checks together. Rev. Enderle gave the invocation at the rally.





Photo from Pres House Archives

*On October 12, the Pres House Board of Directors officially named the \$30,000 endowment fund created as a result of this year's Worship and Music Enhancement Campaign, **The Miriam Bellville Endowment Fund**. It will generate annual income for tuning and maintaining the new organ and recently refurbished grand piano in the Pres House Chapel. In this photo, Bellville, who was Director of Music at Pres House from about 1946 to 1955, is shown at the piano with choir members from that era: (L-R) Sid Wright, Joy Forster Patterson, unidentified, and Bob Weaver.*

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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