



VOICE

A HOME AT THE HEART OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON SINCE 1907 | SPRING 2011

MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE AND RECEIVE

By Alicia Powers

A mouth-watering smell emanates from the kitchen as students walk into Pres House each Sunday for worship. As worship ends, students are greeted by an excellent meal and the friendly faces of members of an area church. Behind the scenes, even more church members are contributing to Pres House. Board members give many hours to help guide Pres House's future. Other people lend their financial or political insight. Donors give money so the ministry at Pres House can continue to grow. All of these contributions are crucial to the ministry at Pres House. Yet, the relationship between Pres House and area churches reaches beyond the work that members of area churches do for Pres House.

A relationship requires two-way interactions, both giving and receiving. While Pres House students enjoy being on the receiving end of the relationship with area churches, we also want to be on the giving end. During the fall semester, students participated in a workday at Holy Wisdom Monastery to prepare the monastery's ecological restoration project for winter. This semester we sent Valentine's Day or Easter cards to homebound members of three area churches. For several semesters, Pres House students have partnered with Christ Presbyterian Church to serve with Interfaith

Hospitality Network's Road Home, a program that provides shelter for homeless families. Through these activities, Pres House students participate in the giving end of this relationship. Yet, the relationship between Pres House and local churches goes still further.

The relationship between Pres House and local churches is not only a relationship of giving and receiving, but also a relationship built on personal relationships between Pres House members and local church members. These relationships have occurred at Pres House through individual spiritual guidance from Holy Wisdom Monastery oblates and through a Christ Care small group led by a local church member. Students also reach beyond the borders of Pres House by visiting Sunday morning worship services at local congregations and participating in a joint Good Friday service with several area churches.

Romans 12:5-6 states, "So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us." As a member of the Pres House community, I am thankful for the gifts and relationships that are being shared between Pres House and area churches.

Photographs in this issue are taken by Haley Christensen



Inside

BWAP ROCKS!

Break With A Purpose was a huge success again this year with a trip to Washington, D.C. Turn to page four and learn how the experience changed our lives and enriched many others.

THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!

By Campus Co-Pastor
Mark Elsdon

"Fine wine is made at Pres House!" That is the message that Pastor Mark Elsdon shared at the Second Annual Volunteer Appreciation Sunday on May 1, 2011. Mark wasn't talking about literal wine but about the loving and joyful Christian community that exists at Pres House and that blesses the UW-Madison campus. Drawing on the scripture from John 15:5-17, Mark thanked all of the many volunteers who are "fruitful branches" connected to the vine that is Jesus Christ. The generous volunteers at Pres House produce beautiful fruit that is a blessing to all who come through the doors as well as the larger campus and Madison community at large. Each year area church members bring meals to the student

worshippers each Sunday; individuals teach courses and provide spiritual direction; board members donate hours and hours each year; students serve in leadership on the Pres House Council, student musicians lead in music worship each week, and much more. As each member of the Pres House family shares the love that God has poured into him or her with others inside and outside of Pres House, amazing wine is made.

After worship students and volunteers from area churches celebrated together at a special dinner reception and the Distinguished Volunteer Award was presented. This year's award went to Sandy Curran. Sandy has volunteered at Pres House for almost six years. Every month during the academic year for that entire time she has organized, cooked, brought and served a meal at Pres House on Sunday nights. Many times she has come alone or with just her daughters. Other times she has brought wonderful folks from her church, Westminster Presbyterian. Her faithfulness to the simple, yet powerful work of providing food at Pres House on Sunday night is incredible. It is impossible to overstate the gift that Sunday night meals are to the Pres House community and Sandy has faithfully, fruitfully, blessed us month after month for six years. Sandy has also served the past two years on the Nominating Committee of the Board of Directors, this year as chair. On that committee she has assisted us in identifying and recruiting new board members to keep Pres House strong and growing. Thank you to Sandy Curran and the many other wonderful volunteers that make fine wine at Pres House!

Sandy Curran, recipient of this year's Distinguished Volunteer Award, and Campus Co-Pastor Mark Elsdon



IN REMEMBRANCE



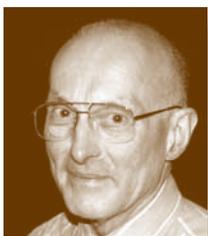
Robert J. Villwock

Rev. Robert J. Villwock, 87, of White Bear Lake, Minn., passed away on Friday, June 4, 2010.

A memorial service was held on Sunday, June 20, at Silver Lake United Methodist Church, in Oakdale, Minn.

He received his D.D. at the University of Chicago Divinity School. He was a campus pastor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Miami University and Bemidji State University. He served the Pioneer Presbyterian Church in Chatfield, Minn.; First Presbyterian Church in Red Lake Falls, Minn., and the Longville Community Church in Longville, Minn. He was also a volunteer subject for the semi-starvation experiment at the University of Minnesota. Rev. Villwock served as an associate pastor under Rev. Jack Collins at Pres House in the early 1950s.

Rev. Villwock is survived by his wife, Dorothy; children, Peter Villwock of Plymouth, Minn., Jenny (Don Lueck) Villwock of Madison, Wis., Robin (Kevin Jewell) Villwock of White Bear Lake and Laurie (Norrell Nelson) Villwock of Roseau, Minn.; four grandchildren and a brother, Arthur Villwock of Milford, Ohio.



A LIFELONG FRIEND

“something clicked”

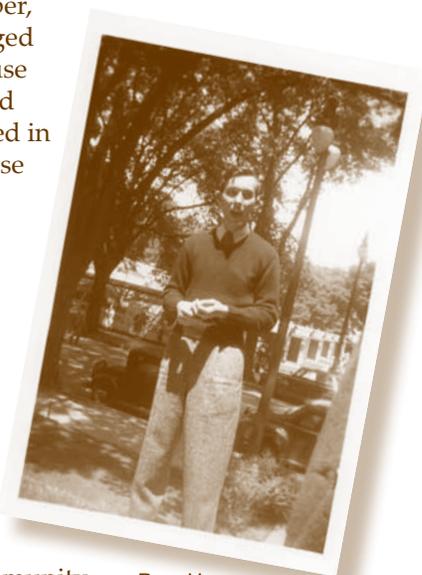
Dr. John Toussaint has a long history at Pres House, one that goes back to the “Glory Days,” when Rev. “Doc” Lower was the presiding Pastor. Toussaint has gone from student, to member, to long-time donor. Recently, I had the privilege to meet with Toussaint and learn about his time at Pres House. We sat in the Pridham Lounge on a sunny, but crisp, spring day, I couldn’t help but feel humbled and impressed at all that he experienced at Pres House. As a college student (1946–1951), Toussaint was invited to attend service with a friend. He stated that, straightaway, “something clicked;” and he discovered a deep connection to the people and the ministry at Pres House. It wasn’t long before he was an avid member of the community, playing the organ for vesper services, singing in the choir, and joining various other activities that went on at the time. Toussaint also served as an Elder on the church Session. He fondly recalled his favorite experiences at Pres House were as a vesper organist and participating in Sacred Music productions that were led by Miriam Bellville and Gertrude Stillman. He reveled in the overwhelming power of the music coupled with the wonderful acoustics in the chapel. During the years that Toussaint was a member, Pres House had a choir of almost 100 and held two worship services to accommodate the sizeable congregation.

There was a twinkle in Toussaint’s eyes as he recounted the many hours he spent at Pres House during his youth, and he confessed that he spent much time at activities with the church. He must have found some time to study as he left Pres House and the UW–Madison campus after finishing medical school.

He completed medical school in 1951, returning to UW in 1952 for his neurology residency. He came back to see Pres House friends and met a new staff member, Carol Towers. They became engaged and were married in the Pres House chapel in August 1953. They joined another Madison church but stayed in touch with friends from Pres House days. In the mid-80s, they helped organize a successful reunion of those who had been part of the campus ministry in the early 50s.

As the nature of campus ministry at Pres House changed over the decades, the Toussaints and many of their generation lost touch with the Pres House community. In recent years as Pres House has experienced a rebirth, the Toussaints have rejoined the Pres House community, this time as donors and volunteers. Their involvement has benefited Pres House in many ways. Toussaint has reached out to former members of his generation and helped to re-establish connections between Pres House and alumni from the time he spent here. He and Carol also generously contributed time and funds to the recent Worship and Music Enhancement fundraising project. The centerpiece of this project was the installation of a new organ in the chapel that alumni and current students alike now enjoy. Toussaint, his wife Carol, and many others from their generation have been instrumental in laying the foundation for future generations of students to walk in the door of Pres House and experience that special “click!”

By Mynda Pull



Pres House Archive photo circa late 1940s



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, WI 53703. You can also give online at www.preshouse.org/donate.

BWAP

Break With A Purpose

On March 12, 2011, sixteen folks from Pres House flew to Washington, D.C., for a unique, student-designed service/learning trip. We spent the week living at the Pilgrimage, a hostel connected with a Presbyterian church called Church of the Pilgrims. From there we visited numerous social service organizations to learn and volunteer our time. We worked in soup kitchens, spent days with low-income elderly, and took lunches onto the street for the homeless. We talked with homeless and formerly homeless people about their lives and experiences. And we toured the great sites of the city including the Capitol, the National Cathedral, and the National Holocaust Museum. During the week, our eyes were opened to the challenges of the poor in America and in Washington, D.C., in particular.

The participants on the trip have written reflections about their experience. Some of their reflections are printed here in this newsletter. You can also listen to reflections students shared in Sunday worship (on our website at: <http://www.preshouse.org/wor.main.cfm>) and watch a video from the trip (at: <http://vimeo.com/preshouse/bwap2011>).

Mark Elsdon, Campus Co-Pastor

We came to our nation's capitol to make change, but we left
changed ourselves.

Our hands froze as we sold newspapers on a street
corner. We felt the degradation of
being ignored by the suited male CEO too busy on his cell phone to acknowledge
our presence. We imagined what it
would be like to know that the next sale of the one dollar newspaper in our
hands would determine whether we could eat that day. We felt the empowering
elation of making a sale, an act that could bring real economic impact and
confidence on a life.

We witnessed a rehabilitation center and hospital in which
amazing services for the addicted and the frostbitten are being provided with
unprecedented success. We saw the
light in the eyes of those who act as servants in these institutions. We were taken aback at
the *goodness*
that is done every day in this world, goodness we had no idea existed until that
moment.

We chopped, diced, stirred, pored, boiled, baked, and
prepared at soup kitchens that feed the souls of thousands of the needy all
over the city.

We shared food with Irving panhandling outside Starbucks,
William by the bus stop, and Trevor on the park bench. We created a relationship and were
present with those scraping to get by.

We came, we saw, we heard, we did and we did it
together.

The kingdom of heaven is like a good day at the soup kitchen
for the Church of the Brethren when no one needs to come.

But until that day, the kingdom of heaven shows itself when
18 students from the University of Wisconsin make change and are changed on a
pilgrimage to D.C.

Hannah Weinberg-Kinsey



The Same. So Different, Though.

The Pilgrimage, 17 March 2011

You are me, and I am you. So different, though.
Should our paths have crossed at different seasons of life, we may have been friends.
What's preventing it now?

You are me, and I am you. So different, though.
You are called Bill.
I, Jonathan.
You are older, hair that's white, a face that's showing time's hand.
I am still young—fairly, anyway—though I am beginning to hear the hours pass. Ticking.
The sound of my day.
The tool of your trade a guitar, one that's been much loved and well played.
Mine a collection of books, many, many of them, in fact.
The ideas of women and men long gone from here.

You are me, and I am you. So different, though.
I have made choices I regretted. They rouse me from sleep sometimes.
I imagine you have made such choices, too.
Do they keep you awake underneath creation's sky, your home?

You are me, and I am you. So different, though.
My life is fairly secure.
You may long for the security I have. Too much taken for granted.
The tables might have been turned, Bill.
Me without a home, no place to rest my heart or head.
You in the comfort of a newly built apartment, surrounded by mementos of grace. Human. Divine.

You are me, and I am you.
Bill and Jonathan. Men.
Old and young.
Musician and scholar.
The same. So different, though.

Jonathan Reid

I was a part of the "Sarah's Circle" team. Sarah's Circle was founded in 1983 to provide affordable and safe housing for very low-income seniors in Washington, D.C. Since then, they have expanded their focus to include senior-specific health and wellness, social, and educational activities. Our team spent four days at Sarah's Circle interacting with the seniors. We served lunches, exercised with them, drank smoothies with them, hung up signs, but most importantly built relationships with them. One of the seniors was named Rudy. The first day we were there, Rudy sang us a song he'd written for his Mother called "In My Mother's Eyes." The compassion and goodwill Rudy showed toward everyone was very inspiring. During the week we heard more of Rudy's story and how when he was born the doctors told his mother that he would never walk. Rudy told us he was ten when he took his first step. Rudy was living proof that there is always hope. I think that is what struck me most about Sarah's Circle and our trip to Washington, D.C., in general: even though the seniors were living in low-cost housing, usually with no income to speak of, there was still hope. When you look at the situation they're in from a distance, it may seem hopeless and daunting to try to help them. But hope resides within people and you see hope when you spend time learning and sharing with people, not analyzing their situation at a distance. So talk to people. Talk to the Rudys, let them sing their song for you, and you will find the beauty of their lives and the hope that dwells in all.

Haley Christensen



I arrive in a place of
uncertainty;
on the inside and the out.

I serve, I listen, I learn.
My previous beliefs, I begin to
doubt.

Something about serving as Jesus
once did
Makes my heart want to shout!

I will leave this place changed
My old self is no more.

That one spring break to D.C.
has truly opened up a new door.

Connor Hanson



SMALL GROUPS BRING US CLOSER



Freshmen/Sophomore Men's Group

Luke Schroeder, Campus
Co-Pastor Mark Elsdon, Chris
Facklam, Connor Hanson,
Michael Landau, Will Ault, Peter
Carrol, Erik Swanson
(not pictured)

By Cody Hanson

Small group meetings, and the relationships that they help to foster have always been an important part of Pres House and its community. One of the challenges of small groups at Pres House in the past has been limited staff and pastoral resources to help lead them. In order to remedy this problem, more student involvement and leadership would be required as our community continues to grow. This past fall five of my fellow Pres House community members and I took part in training sessions to help us to become better small group leaders, in the hope that by the next semester we would be able to lead a group of our peers in study and fellowship.

Our sessions were led by our friend Cheryl Shult, a member of Christ Presbyterian Church in Madison and an experienced small group leader mentor. We learned about the commitment that a small group leader makes to their members, ways to facilitate conversations, as well as common pitfalls that groups can sometimes find themselves in such as breach of

confidentiality. Each week's lesson would build on the previous as we simultaneously engaged in small group together, even taking turns to role-play different situations and lead the group in our own scripture studies.

We are now nearing the end of spring semester 2011, and the first ever student planned and led small groups at Pres House have been meeting since January! There are two student-led groups this semester, led by four members of the training class. One group which I help to co-lead is a Bible study which draws connections to popular works such as films and books and uses those connections to help us to better understand the lessons and motivations in the Bible. The other group is a women's group that spends their time catching up and offering care to each other through fellowship. Overall, student-led small groups have been a success this semester and the student leadership at Pres House will be looking to continue and develop this new tradition.



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 a 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.

BUILDING FELLOWSHIP AND COMMUNITY

By Rachael Jocewicz and Samantha Johnson

ACADEMIC SUCCESS. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY. COMMUNITY. SPIRITUAL EXPLORATION. These are the four core values that the twelve Pres House Fellowship members have committed to upholding. As peer role models (some of who receive scholarship) living in this uniquely innovative housing arrangement, we have been given the opportunity to build meaningful relationships and grow as leaders. Although only in its first year, the potential of the fellowship mission and its members is undeniable.

We began this year as strangers. At our opening Dinner Banquet in September, the fellowship members came together to share a meal and conversation with some distinguished members of the UW community. The theme of the evening centered on establishing and maintaining lifelong connections. Next, we all took a trip out to Holy Wisdom Monastery for a day of service. As a special treat, we began the day with an amazing tour of their LEED-certified facility—an inspiring vision of environmental sustainability. Further into the semester, the fellowship members were schooled in financial know-how by two long-time friends of Pres House, Tom and Debi Schwei. This



Samantha Johnson, Nikki Johnson, Christy Strickland (Chaplain Intern), Soyoung Chung, Rachael Jocewicz

educational workshop on personal finance related back to the core value of personal responsibility. Late into the winter, the fellowship members were given the opportunity to develop their own event related to fostering community. So one quiet Sunday evening, we joined each other for a viewing of the movie “Lars & The Real Girl” followed by an insightful discussion and debriefing.

In February, we decided to “Share the Love” and get the whole building involved! The fellowship members were paired up into teams, assigned a floor of the apartment building, and went door to door collecting nonperishable food items for the Second Harvest Foodbank. Later that same month, special guest and author Parker J. Palmer joined us for breakfast and reading discussion of his book, *Let Your Life Speak*. The topic of the book—vocation and discovering one’s inner calling—was quite appropriate for this

group of young students journeying to find their passion.

Our most recent event, a “progressive dinner,” had the fellowship members opening their homes and inviting each other in for an evening of good food and good times. Now that the weather is beautiful once again, we are looking forward to our last official event scheduled for this year—a hike out to Picnic Point, and a twilight bonfire complete with music, activities and of course, food.

But this does not mean the final farewell has come. Although we have not yet completed our eight events, planning for next year is currently underway. With some familiar and some new faces, the Fellowship will be expanding in both membership and mission. Our goals for next year include jump-starting the relationship-building process, integrating more building-wide events, and hosting more optional activities. Our hope is to one day hear Pres House’s name being dropped in a different sort of way. Instead of just a, “Oh yeah, the place with the great view?” or “What a great location!” people will say, “Yeah, I’ve heard of Pres House. There’s something different... something special... about that place.”

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, Oregon
First Presbyterian Church, Prairie du Sac
First Presbyterian Church, Waunakee
Holy Wisdom Monastery, Madison

Oakland Cambridge Presbyterian Church
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Madison
Rock Prairie Presbyterian Church, Janesville
Union Presbyterian Church, Monroe



SCENES FROM THE WOMEN'S RETREAT

Top: Lauren Grossmann, Alicia Powers, Haley Christensen, Allison Winter, Christy Strickland (Chaplain Intern), Allysa Hopkins, Hannah Weinberg-Kinsey, Olivia Taber

Right: Alicia Powers, Hannah Weingberg-Kinsey



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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