



VOICE

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

FALL RETREAT 2011: A REVELATION

By Chelsea Cornelius
Undergraduate Student

Inside

CHANGE.

With the Campus mall construction completed, Pres House is literally at the crossroads of student life at UW-Madison.

In the company of new friends, fellowship, the beautiful Green Lake Conference Center, and this year's speaker Darren Pollock, the Pres House Fall Retreat created a peaceful place for growing in community and faith. The weekend was filled with opportunities to get to know each other and experience a profound sense of community. From playing the initial "learn everyone's name" games, to exploring the Conference Center's tower and waterfront, taking dozens of pictures in the beautiful Fall weather, or enjoying a cup of tea with friends in the Conference Center café, the retreat provided abundant opportunities to form friendships and strengthen the Pres House community.

Sharing meals together was also an experience I came to value more deeply during the retreat. This is something we, as the Pres House community, have been blessed with as part of each Sunday's worship service, and to be able to experience that tradition during mealtimes at the retreat greatly strengthened my sense of community.

On Friday night our guest speaker for the weekend, Darren Pollock, began his first of three talks on the very intriguing Book of Revelation. Before embarking on this daunting journey, Darren asked the group if any of us was very familiar with, or understood, the

Book of Revelation. Nobody raised his or her hand. This, I believe, was one of the most remarkable moments of the retreat. We were about to begin an exploration of the Book of Revelation together from the same confused and curious point of view, recognizing the intensity—and almost taboo—nature of the book, but also willing to learn and grow together in faith. Darren acknowledged the themes in the Book of Revelation in a thought-provoking way—allowing us not only to understand aspects of the book through a first-century Greco-Roman cultural lens, but also through its application for people of present day Christianity.

We broke into small groups every night to discuss the talks, ask questions, explore what we were confused about, and share our own experiences. Growing in faith as a community was truly enlightening. Reverend Dr. Brett Younger, in his sermon titled "Loving God With All Your Mind," explains, "If we don't include our minds in our love for God, we end up worshipping simple ideas about God rather than humbling ourselves before the Infinite. Through questions, conversations, reading Scripture, and exploring the text in new ways, I believe we "loved God with our minds" in a new and challenging way.

During our weekend at Green Lake Conference Center, through new experiences and the formation of friendships and community, God called us to love not only with our hearts, but also with our minds. We were called to share experiences of joy and friendship, adventure and relaxation. We were also called to wonder, to question, to think in new and profound ways, to be challenged and enlightened. This, I deeply believe, is what growing in faith as a community is about, and I am blessed and immensely grateful to have experienced such enlightenment.



Photographs in this issue are taken by Haley Christensen and Stefan Zorn

KENYA BELIEVE IT?

WE'RE GOING INTERNATIONAL.

Thirteen students and Pastor Mark are taking the first international Pres House Break with a Purpose in recent history this winter! From January, 7 to 20, 2012, a group from Pres House will live, work, learn and serve in Nairobi, Kenya, as part of an exciting Break With A Purpose experience.

We will be based in the capital city of Nairobi. The needs in Nairobi are great. It is home to the largest slum in Sub-Saharan Africa, Kibera, where millions live in horrendous conditions and dire poverty. The poor have been hit hard by recent, rampant inflation throughout Kenya and are devastated by high rates of HIV/AIDS in their communities. Drought in East Africa has led to a severe famine throughout the region. Deforestation has destroyed watersheds and contributed to food shortages.

Kenya faces many challenges, but there are also many gifted people and organizations working to solve their own problems. We will provide encouragement and assistance to the local Kenyan people and organizations we volunteer with. We will learn first-hand a great deal about the difficulties and hopes that shape the lives of people in Kenya.

Specifically, we will deliver school supplies for children in urban slums, work with children and teachers in schools, volunteer with HIV/AIDS support organizations, and plant trees for re-forestation. We are especially excited to

connect Pres House students studying to be teachers with schools in Kenya and those interested in health care with hospitals and clinics. Through our contacts in Nairobi we will have unique opportunities to meet personally with leaders in health care, education, business, technology, nonprofits and other sectors. We also look forward to spending time with Christian college students in Kenya to share experiences of faith and to develop a greater understanding of their expression of religion. On our way to Kenya we will be spending a day in Istanbul, Turkey, visiting ancient Christian and Muslim sites. At the end of our trip we will visit a Kenyan national park to see marvelous African elephants, lions, and other animals in their natural habitat.

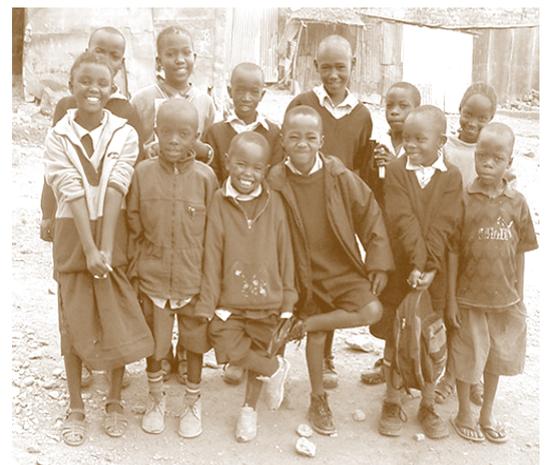
The cost of taking a trip like this is significant but the impact it will have in the lives of students and those they will work with is priceless. The team has been working hard to raise money to help with the cost of the trip. Each team member is paying part of his or her way, but we still need to raise over \$1000 per person in order to go. Please consider an extra gift to Pres House to help send this team to serve and grow in Africa. Thank you!

The students have set up an online blog at <http://kenyabwap2012.wordpress.com/> and Facebook page (search Pres House Kenya) to share information and updates before, during, and after the trip. Visit these pages online and keep updated on their trip.



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.



PCUSA COLLEGIATE MINISTRIES TASK FORCE MEETS AT PRES HOUSE

October 19–21, 2011

The median age of a U.S. churchgoer in a mainline, Protestant congregation is now 58 years old. It is not a big surprise that young adults are largely absent from churches, and it is a question that many leaders are wrestling with: where are the young people?

In the past thirty years, support for campus ministry in the Presbyterian Church has rapidly declined resulting in the closing of campus ministry centers across the nation as well as a lack of resources for congregations to reach out to college students. There are exceptions—we are grateful for the strong support which enables Pres House to be a vibrant ministry—but many students on college and university campuses go through their years without Christian community.

In response to the state of campus ministry in the Presbyterian Church, an overture at the 219th General Assembly (Minneapolis, 2010) was passed to “reestablish an Office of Collegiate Ministries in the PCUSA as a vital and integral part of the ministry and mission of the church” and to prepare a strategy for mission in higher education. A Task Force of campus ministers and chaplains from around the country has been convened to work on a plan to present at the next General Assembly which will meet in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 2012.

In October, the group met at Pres House to continue their work. Task Force members were interested to learn about the new and unique model of campus ministry in the Pres House Apartments, and were encouraged to hear about the transformation Pres



Pres House Co-Pastor Erica Liu was asked to be a part of this Task Force.

House has undergone in the past seven years from near death to growth and life again.

Please pray for the Task Force as they work to create a strategic and sustainable plan for campus ministry in the Presbyterian Church so that all college students have the opportunity to experience the grace of Jesus Christ and to be nurtured in faithful communities. We trust in the transformative power of God to breathe new life into campus ministry all over the church!

PRES HOUSE COUNCIL GROWS STRONGER

By Haley Christensen
Undergraduate Student

I am the Moderator of the Pres House Student Leadership Council. This is the third year since the creation of the PH Council and we’ve come a long way since then! This year 16 people serve on the Pres House Council. Every year we get a better grasp on our role in the Pres House community and how to become a more effective council.

The Council is made up of six teams: the Service Team, which provides service opportunities; the Worship Team which helps lead Worship on Sunday; the Outreach to Campus Team, which concentrates on our interaction with the greater UW–Madison campus; the Outreach to Churches Team, which builds stronger

relationships with surrounding churches; and the Fellowship Team which puts on fun events for the Pres House community. The teams are led by members on the council, but there are people on the teams who are not members of the council and it is an initiative this year to grow the teams.

There have been a lot of exciting things that have happened or are going to happen this semester. There was an Interfaith Day of Service where Pres House, Hillel, and the Muslim Student Association came together to learn and serve together through multiple service projects. Frunch (Freshman Lunch) was attended by 100+ freshmen who came to eat quesadillas and socialize during



Welcome Week on campus. We are having the first Pres House Prom; (Safari Theme) for a flashback to high school, and all proceeds will go toward our trip to Kenya in January. The Pres House Band is up, running, and possibly touring local churches soon, and these are just a few of the exciting things in the works. Student-led initiatives are constantly being born and we hope to keep growing.

PRES HOUSE APARTMENT

Since the 1920s Pres House has had a vision for providing a welcome living environment for students at UW–Madison. When the original Pres House was built in the early 1930s the plan called for student housing as well as a chapel. The chapel was completed, but the loss of funding as a result of the Great Depression forced Pres House to put the plan for housing on hold. Throughout the following decade students did live at Pres House but in small numbers. They were called ROOJAHs (Royal Order Of Janitors And Hosts). They lived in nooks and crannies, offices and even bathrooms of the historic chapel building. Despite this inauspicious start, the dream of providing a special residence on campus for larger numbers of students never died. By God’s grace and almost 75 years later, in 2007, we opened the newly constructed Pres House Apartments.

The Pres House Apartment facility is a beautiful, seven-story building connected via an underground hallway to the Pres House Chapel. After reaching about 80-90% full in the first few years, occupancy has been at 100% for the last two years. This year we have accommodated more students than ever before as a result of growing demand for shared rooms and a space at Pres House.

But Pres House Apartments are more than a beautiful place to live. It is a truly unique living experience for students and a tremendous opportunity for ministry due to its location in the heart of the UW–Madison campus. Since 2007 we have provided on-site staff, pastoral care,

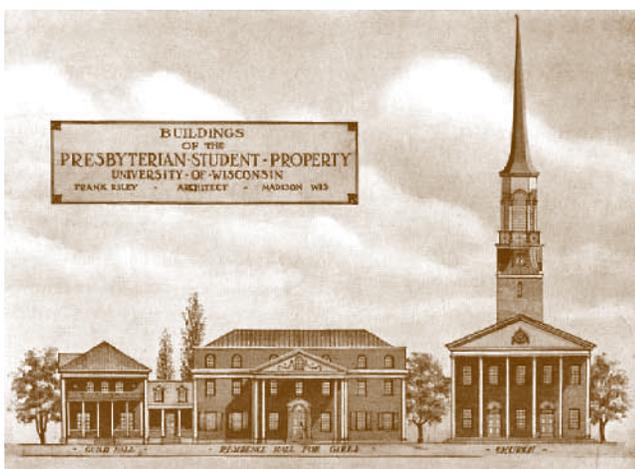
and many programs consistent with our mission of fostering the emotional, spiritual and intellectual growth of students on campus. Students naturally spend far more time in their living environment than they do in church, the library, or the classroom. The Pres House Apartments seek to reach students where they are by providing a safe and welcoming home, grounded in the love of God, where growth is nurtured and encouraged, and where students of any faith or of none at all can engage together in an intentional journey toward wholeness.

This fall we are launching three exciting initiatives to expand our impact in fulfilling this purpose:

Director of Residential Community: Pres House is in the process of hiring a Director of Residential Community to lead a major multi-year initiative to deepen and broaden the impact of our residential mission. The hire for this new permanent staff position will work to provide a safe and welcoming home for residents, enhance community connections within the PH Apartments, create and direct new ways for residents to engage in intentional growth, serve as a mentor, comforter, and advocate for residents, and lead outreach efforts to deepen connections between the apartment community and the campus.

Student Initiated Micro-Community Grant Program: The Student Led Micro-Community Grant Program is a new scholarship program in which students develop and experience intentional and purposeful living in micro-communities organized around a meaningful focus. An example might be a group committed to living out Christian spiritual disciplines daily/weekly, offering spiritual discipline opportunities for others, and reflecting on their experiences. Another example would be a group where the students volunteer at various non-profit organizations for 5-10 hours per week and then share their experiences together over a weekly meal and with the campus at large through a video or forum. This program expands upon the Pres House Fellowship that currently provides 20 residents with scholarship support and involves them in intentional programs.

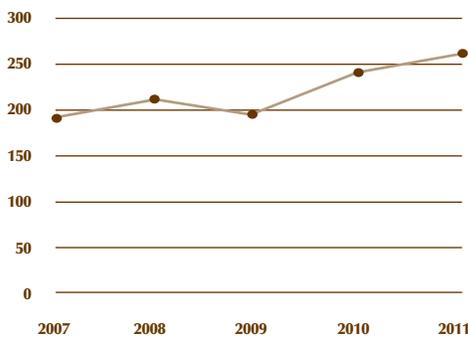
Community for Student Veterans: We have been working with the Assistant Dean for Veterans at the University and other student veteran groups to create a supportive living option for student veterans on campus. Student veterans often struggle to find housing that meets their unique needs. Pres House is excited about welcoming students who have served in our nation’s military and assisting them in the transition to student life on campus while providing a community that supports their emotional, spiritual and intellectual growth.



Early 1920's concept of a student center, church, and residence hall on the Pres House property.

MINISTRY CONTINUES TO GROW

**PH Apartment Occupancy
Fall Each Year**



The ancient city of Corinth, Greece, stood on an isthmus at the crossroads of key trade routes between central Greece and the Peloponnese. Strategically located Corinth was an ethnically, culturally, and religiously diverse city. It was filled with people traveling to and fro bringing with them ideas and viewpoints from all over the ancient Near East. The early Church in Corinth was a witness to the grace of Christ at that pivotal location.

Since planting roots on the corner of State Street and Murray Street in the 1920s, Pres House has also existed as a witness to the grace of Christ in the very heart of the diverse UW–Madison campus. Those who purchased the Pres House property almost 90 years ago had the foresight to select a location second to none. In October 2011 our location got even better.

For the past three years the University has been working on updating utilities, expanding the Chazen Art Museum, and turning Murray Street into the spectacular East Campus Mall. This project was just completed. There are two main pedestrian malls and corridors on the UW Campus: State St. Mall and East Campus Mall. Pres House sits on the very corner of these malls.

Like the early church in Corinth, Pres House is located on an isthmus at the crossroads of thought, discourse, and education. As thousands of students bustle by every day we stand as a beacon of God's love, welcome students into the embrace of Jesus' grace, and send disciples out by the work of the Holy Spirit.

We extend you an open invitation to visit Pres House and see the surrounding area at any time. Drop in or call to make an appointment.

The Pres House Chapel and adjacent apartments now face the new UW East Campus Mall.

BLESSED TO BE IN GOD'S SERVICE

By Jonathan Reid
Graduate Student



Faith vs. works. A debate as old as the hills, right? James says it best, I think, when he writes, "But someone will say, 'You have faith and I have works.' Show me your faith without works, and I by my works will show you my faith" (2:18). As disciples of Christ, we are a people called to love and good works for the sake of God and sent out for the sake of the world. We are not asked if we would like to be sent. We are sent people by nature of Christ's call, pilgrims on earth for the good of the whole people of God, our neighbors near and far.

Salt and light, as Jesus says (Matt. 5:13-16).

Pres House remains a community that is deeply passionate about serving others, a family of followers committed to good works, and that passion seems especially positive in this season of economic hardship, when more people than usual find themselves drawing on community resources, like food pantries and shelters. Our partnerships within the greater Madison community have only deepened, and for that we are grateful.

Over the summer and during the first months of the academic year, Pres House students, on given Saturdays, have been active at the Grace Food Pantry, a ministry of Grace Episcopal Church on the Capitol Square, where we help to distribute food and other essentials to patrons, individuals and families, who need meal assistance and, a sign of hope. Patrons are able to visit Grace Food Pantry twice per month, which no doubt falls incredibly short of addressing their full needs. Pres House is glad to be a part of this partnership, and we enjoy the personal connection that this opportunity creates between volunteers and those who visit the Pantry. Grace Church provides a truly invaluable resource in maintaining this ministry.

In addition to the Food Pantry, members of the Pres House community continue to assist The Road Home, Dane County, through its Interfaith Hospitality Network,

a multi-religious association of congregations that, on a rotating basis, make their places of worship available as housing for temporarily homeless families. For the past few years, Pres House has consistently partnered with our friends at Christ Presbyterian Church to provide a place of welcome and safety to Madison-area families. I am always moved by the response of students who, though busy, take time to help ensure the welfare of their neighbors facing not only the hardship of homelessness, but also the compounded stresses that attend it. Students prepare and serve meals to shelter guests, entertain guests' children, and occasionally serve as overnight hosts. The Road Home is a special program, dear to many of us at Pres House, and we are honored to be involved in its efforts through Christ Presbyterian.

Most recently, Pres House students participated in "Love Your Neighbor," an interfaith day of service that engaged students from UW Hillel, the Jewish campus organization, and the Muslim Students Association, in addition to other Christian groups at the UW-Madison. Pres House has co-sponsored this event twice, and community members have been actively involved in organizing to make this event a success. Approximately 25 students from across campus made their way to Hillel on the morning of Sunday, October 16, where they shared a light brunch and good conversation about service as understood within their religious traditions. From there students dispersed to four work sites, which offered them the opportunity to put their faith into action. I am proud of this effort to build bridges, and I remain hopeful that it will persist as part of the service and outreach landscape at UW-Madison for years to come.

Yes, Pres House students have been busy these past months. We are not busy for the sake of busyness, though. What we do is part and parcel of what we say about Jesus each week when we gather for worship. It is faith and works, brothers and sisters. When we receive the benediction at the conclusion of worship, we acknowledge our reliance, and the world's, on God's grace, and we go in peace to love and serve the Lord. We are blessed so that we may be a blessing to others. Thanks be to God!

MUSINGS ABOUT MINISTRY

By Hannah Weinberg-Kinsey
Undergraduate Student

Last June, I traveled to New Orleans as one of forty undergraduate fellows attending the Fund for Theological Education's Leaders in Ministry Conference at Dillard University. For five days, I got to know others considering or answering a call to the church. There were those like me, currently attending an undergraduate institution, just considering what it would mean to go to seminary. There were those about to start their first year at seminary, and finally, there were those who had spent the last year or so volunteering and were now considering a theological education. It was a smattering of ages, genders, sexual orientations, races, and denominations from across the country. Together we heard and saw church, nonprofit, and community leaders that have and are rebuilding New Orleans.

These leaders talked about New Orleans being a place for ministers, a place calling their name. In the lower ninth ward, a place that seemed forgotten by city and country when the levies broke, pouring lethal amounts of water into the area populated by those with little resources and therefore little

ability to escape the storm, is a place, even today, that is broken by poverty and the incalculable evils that fuel that cancer. It is a place where ministers, ordained or not, can feed, clean, help, and love. The experience of being in presence with those who had creatively and lovingly given of their lives for the common good was breathtaking and invaluable. The type of ministry these leaders talked about was not from on high but down in the thick of things, jumping in front of bulldozers, knocking on doors, and in an abandoned Walgreens.

Another speaker spoke of New Orleans as a place of tangible resurrection, where the new restaurant down the street was a momentous occasion of life returning to the city. I found this hope and new life in New Orleans, in the city and people there, but also in myself. When the time came to leave the heat of the South, I found myself invigorated by my experience with kindred spirits. Being a part of this fellowship gave me the opportunity to be in the thick of the brokenness of the world and consider what it would mean in my life to live and work for those who lived in that brokenness. Out of those moments of sadness and hardship, as I encountered in Louisiana, can come the most profound joy. I found joy in the city of jazz because for me ministry and truly living out my faith gives me a feeling of reality and oneness with God. In New Orleans I wrestled with other fellows in a small group about how to rebuild the church to truly serve God and God's people. I wiped my wet forehead as I picked up trash in the Lower Ninth. My new friends and I sang at the top of our lungs, clapping with all our might, marching and dancing to the Lord Most High. At these times, I feel like scales are dropped from eyes and I am experiencing a more true world. I still don't know exactly what my future plans will entail, but I know I want to do the work the leaders of New Orleans are doing and I know I want to have a real relationship with God in the form of ministry, love, and prayer.

Note: A very, very special thanks to Pres House Campus Co-pastor, Erica Liu, who informed me about and recommended me for this amazing honor and opportunity!



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.



Frunch Bunch!



Pastor Mark cooks up grilled quesadillas on one of the hottest days of the year. The Pres House Freshman Welcome Lunch was a tremendous success, drawing more than 150 students.



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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