



RACIAL ETHNIC CONVOCATION

October 5-6, 2007

Stony Point Conference Center



BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

The Reverend Robert N. Burkins, Sr. has served as Senior Pastor of the Elmwood United Presbyterian Church since May, 1987. Under his leadership, Elmwood has grown from approximately 300 to its current membership of nearly 1000. Combining evangelistic outreach, innovative worship, a strong discipleship emphasis, and enthusiastic lay involvement in ministries, Elmwood has become one of the strongest and fastest growing African American Presbyterian Churches in America. Elmwood has a decentralized ministry style that emphasizes equipping lay leadership for ministry. More than 40 trained lay ministers provide spiritual and pastoral leadership in the church. Many community outreach ministries have been started by lay leadership teams, including the Harambee Community Development Initiative, Inc., a not-for-profit social service and economic development corporation.

Reverend Burkins was born in Rock Hill, South Carolina. He graduated from Wofford College, Spartanburg, South Carolina and the Interdenominational Theological Center (Johnson C. Smith Seminary), Atlanta, Georgia. Prior to the Elmwood pastorate, Reverend Burkins served as pastor of the Woodlawn Presbyterian Church, Jacksonville, Florida. He is married to the former Wendy Zimmerman and has two children, Alaythia and Robert Jr.

The Racial Ethnic Convocation will be held on October 6-7, 2006, at the Stony Point Conference Center. This year's theme is **Making These Bones Live: Witnessing to the Whole Church**. The keynote speaker is Rev. Robert Burkins, pastor of the Elmwood Presbyterian Church in East Orange, NJ.

For more information on the Convocation, please contact Clint McCoy by phone at 315-446-5990 or 1-800-585-5881, X-205 or by email at cmccoy@synodne.org.

For registration information, please contact Nancy Lomberk by phone at 315-446-5990 or 1-800-585-5881, X-214 or email at nlomberk@synodne.org. A registration form may be downloaded from the Synod's website at www.synodne.org.

SEMINARY NEWS FROM WITHIN THE SYNOD

Auburn Theological Seminary and other area seminaries and divinity schools will co-sponsor *For the Living of These Days*, the fifth Harry Emerson Fosdick Preaching Convocation at the Riverside Church in New York, will be held October 23-26 in honor of Riverside's founding minister. The conference assembles preachers, seminary professors and church leaders for worship, preaching, keynote addresses, panels and workshops. For registration information go to www.fosdickconvocation.org.

Princeton Theological Seminary has created a strategic plan for 2006-2009, looking toward its bicentennial in 2012 addresses issues of identity, curriculum, governance, part- and full-time education, student life and financial affairs – with a timeline. Read the plan online and send your comments to the seminary: www.ptsem.edu/news/strategicplan/strategicplanindex.php.

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New Way of Being Synod as Assembly Convenes at Stony Point October 20-21, 2006

Past synod commissioners may not recognize the new annual meeting of the Synod Assembly scheduled for October 20-21, 2006, at the Stony Point Conference Center, where commissioners, Youth Advisory Delegates and staff from twenty-two presbyteries in the Northeast will gather to share and celebrate the good news of God's work in our midst. Reflection, Reconnection, Renewal and Action are all purposes for the synod gathering as the Synod centers itself on worship and the celebration of its diverse ministries.

What will make this Assembly different, aside from the installation of Executives Mary Lynne Flowers (Executive for Administration/Stated Clerk) and Clint McCoy (Executive for Partnerships), is the addition of a mission market place where Presbytery Partnership Groups, agencies and organizations will have an opportunity to tell the story of their work in Christ's name in a way that will be up close and personal for commissioners. Four workshops will also be offered for commissioners and youth advisory delegates in order to help enlarge our understanding

of the whole church: 1) the Presbyterian Washington Office, 2) the Presbyterian Office at the United Nations, 3) the Moveable Feast as a resource for Church Transformation, and 4) dynamics of Christian Stewardship.

Presbytery Partnership Groups will have an opportunity to share the plans and directions in which God is leading as the synod's mission is expressed ever more locally through regional cooperation. Partnership Groups will also have the opportunity to tell their stories during the business meeting of the Assembly. In this way we learn from one another and celebrate the unique work being done through cooperation.

Presbytery Partnership Groups will also meet as entities as part of the Synod Assembly, bringing to fruition plans that have been developing since the last Synod assembly held in late April of this year.

The Synod Council will meet for a day immediately before the Assembly in order to make recommendations to the whole Synod. The budget

for 2007 will be considered at this Synod Assembly, and the Council will have opportunity to review it before it is presented, as well as review others groups' reports and recommendations coming to the Assembly.

Other groups are expected to meet in association with the Assembly, before it gathers as well, including PPAN (Public Policy Advocacy network) and the Education Task Force that will be reviewing higher education grant proposals and the work of college chaplaincies and campus ministries & the New England Presbytery Partnership Group.

New Way to Make a Gift to the Church

"Congress has passed, and the President has signed, a new law that provides a new way for individuals to make a gift," reports Mark Klemm, Senior Vice President for Development of the Presbyterian Foundation. "The Pension Protection Act of 2006 allows Individual Retirement Account owners age 70 1/2 and older to make direct gifts to public charities such churches from IRA accounts without reporting the gift as income!" Up to \$100,000 can be given in 2006 and 2007. Klemm says that business owners and

professionals may be among those in the best position to take advantage of this giving opportunity since the gift reduces otherwise reportable taxable income. Here is a way to support your church with a gift to your congregation, general mission, or a specific enterprise of the presbytery, synod or General Assembly. Questions about this opportunity can be directed to Pat Ohlmann, Associate Vice President for Gift Planning at the Foundation: 1-800-858-6127 ext. 5957.



Overture – International Trafficking of Children

The Synod of the Northeast presented an overture at the October 2005 Synod Assembly, which was approved to forward to the 217th (2006) General Assembly. The General Assembly approved the overture. The entire overture is located on the Synod's website, www.synodne.org. It is on Page 4, Story #2.

To read the overture from the General Assembly, go to www.pcusa.org/ga217/business/overtures/ovt1905.htm.

To read an article from the PC(USA) News written by Toya Richards Hill on September 15th written by Toya Richards Hill, go to www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2006/06470.htm.



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