

# Church Connections

a newsletter for Churches of Christ in the Great Lakes and Northeast regions

## College Personnel Connections

In recent months, Dr. David Fleer, professor of religion, spoke for the Central Ohio Preacher's Meeting and the Heartland area gathering in Kansas. Dr. Brian Stogner, professor of psychology, spoke for the Valley Christian Academy Annual Dinner, while Shannon Williams, campus minister, spoke for a teen retreat in the Cincinnati area and led worship for the Keystone State Worship in Pennsylvania.

Several employees from Rochester College have filled pulpits for congregations over the past few months. Congregations assisted include Ann Arbor, MI; Ashland, OH; Brighton, MI; Clawson, MI (Heritage); Dearborn Heights, MI (Parkside); Eastpointe, MI (Northeast); Farmington Hills, MI; Flint, MI (Averill Avenue); Flint, MI (Bristol Road); Flushing, MI; Franklin, IN; Howell, MI; Jackson, MI (Horton Road); Kalamazoo, MI (East Main); Lake Orion, MI; Lansing, MI (Greater Lansing); Lapeer, MI; Livonia, MI; McMurray, PA; Mentor, OH; Midland, MI; Montpelier, VT; Oregon, OH (Echo Meadows); Perrysburg, OH; Petoskey, MI; Plymouth, MI; Port Huron, MI; Rochester Hills, MI; Roseville, MI; Southgate, MI (Gateway); Sterling Heights, MI (Metro); Taylor, MI (Sunset); Toledo, OH (Flanders Road); Walled Lake, MI; Westerville, OH; and Windsor, ON (Westside). Those speaking include Dr. John Barton, Dr. Craig Bowman, David Brackney, Ron Cox, Doug Edwards, Dr. David Fleer, Tracey Hebert, Kent Hoggatt, Dr. Keith Huey, Brad Irwin, Michael Light; Dr. Gordon McKinnon, Toby Osborn, Frank Pitts, Garth Pleasant, Jeff Simmons, Dr. Greg Stevenson, Dr. Brian Stogner, Dr. Michael Westerfield, and Shannon Williams.

## How can Rochester College serve you?

Administrative change in any institution or business normally results in reassessment. Soon after a recent change in leadership at Rochester College, a group of individuals met on campus to discuss ways the college could assist congregations in their efforts to spread the kingdom. While partnerships have continued over the years, participants decided it was time to strengthen connections and become even more involved in the lives of congregations.

"One of the reasons that Christian colleges exist is to serve," stated Elton Albright,

director of church relations. "Our mission goes beyond educating the students that come to our campus. We feel we must also serve the congregations that were responsible for establishing the college."

Since 1959, hundreds of pulpits in Churches of Christ have been filled by college personnel either on a long-term or fill-in basis. Many individuals have benefitted from regional workshops conducted by college faculty and staff. Student groups have knocked doors, assisted with benevolence projects, and provided entertainment for hundreds of youth gatherings around the Midwest and Northeast.

In order to highlight the many good things happening in area congregations and interaction of the college with churches, Dr. Michael Westerfield, interim president of the college, proposed the publication of a newsletter for congregations in the region. As a result, this introductory issue of Church Connections was developed.

"Both the college and the congregations in the region have a history of service, so we felt a publication that would highlight such activities would be helpful for everyone," stated Dr. Westerfield. "Response to the publication will help us determine its future in coming months."



Education certification officer Lynne Stewart offers advice for Bible class teachers at a 1990 workshop at Great Lakes Christian College.

## Message from the Interim President

By the time you receive this publication, my short tenure as interim president of Rochester College will have ended and Dr. Michael Westerfield, provost of the college, will have replaced me for the longer haul as our Presidential Search Committee conducts a national search for our next president.

I have enjoyed working with the college family; they are a great group of people! I have enjoyed working with several groups of key people as we tackled several priority challenges. One challenge we faced was the urgent need to improve relations with our church constituents and alumni. The other challenge is final planning for the new academic building that is nearing ground-breaking and related fund-raising needs. Positive decisions have been reached and implemented on both items. Thank you for your expressions of confidence in me.

I commend Dr. Westerfield to you. He has preached at a number of local congregations and his love for Christian education and his ability to articulate it is well-known and respected. I know you will like him.

Bob Utley, Board of Trustees

## Library houses church history collection



Historical items catch the attention of Chase Pratt.

On May 12, 2003, employees of the Ham Library noticed a date on the articles of incorporation for the Plum Street Church of Christ. While unintentional, they were hanging the articles on a library wall exactly 100 years after they were signed.

The document is just one of many artifacts now housed on the campus of Rochester College. The Plum Street congregation, established in the 1860's, holds a unique place in history as the first Church of Christ in metropolitan Detroit.

"Our restoration history collection is

unique because it is the only one in the United States that focuses on this region," stated Steven Bowers, director of library services. "We are indebted to Dr. Vernon Boyd for his efforts in collecting these items and his generous donation of the collection to the college."

In 1992, Dr. Boyd, a minister in the Detroit area for over 30 years, donated his first artifact to the college, a silver communion pitcher given to the Cameron Avenue Church of Christ in 1905. The pitcher likely was used with two chalices until the influenza and tuberculosis epidemics of that era caused churches to begin using individual communion cups.

Since 1992, Dr. Boyd has continued to collect numerous documents, photographs, and artifacts relating to Restoration History in the Great Lakes region. Since the new library opened last fall, Dr. Boyd has started bringing items for a display case on a regular basis as he finishes research. Eventually, the entire collection will be housed in the library.

"Students are intrigued by the collection as much as visitors to the campus," stated Mr. Bowers. "In particular, we have a lot of questions about a rocking chair that once resided in the nursery of the Hamilton Street Church of Christ, a descendant of the Plum Street congregation. All of these items provide a wonderful testimony to our heritage with Churches of Christ."



Providing a new hub for the academic program, the Ham Library enhances the college campus.

a special seminar  
hosted by Rochester College  
in conjunction with IMPACT

### Marriage Matters

featuring

Jerry and Lynn Jones

Saturday, October 18

Jerry and Lynn Jones believe that marriage is the most significant human relationship that exists. What happens in the home reflects on the children, schools, communities, churches, businesses, and nations. As a result, Jerry and Lynn have done more than 200 seminars in 37 states to help build strong marriage relationships.

For more information on the seminar, contact the Rochester College Advancement Office at 248.218.2011.

## Student Connections

Six Rochester College ministry majors assisted congregations through internships this past summer. Senior family ministry major Brad Vize from Clinton Township, Michigan, saw "Christ in action" as he observed Russ Bone, minister of the Parkside Church of Christ in Dearborn Heights, Michigan, gently and effectively minister to people in a variety of settings. Senior Chris Shields from Richton Park, Illinois, served as a worship and youth ministry intern and "learned about sensitivities in leading people to the throne of God." Congregations interested in sponsoring an intern should contact Dr. David Fleeer at [dfleeer@rc.edu](mailto:dfleeer@rc.edu) or 248.218.2144.

Despite international tensions and the State Department discouraging travel, Henry Oyier, a junior computer systems management major, returned this sum-

mer to his homeland of Kenya, along with eight other students from Rochester College to help approximately 500 homeless youth. Each day, they taught Bible classes, played sports, and prepared food for the street kids. The nine also conducted a leadership camp for eighteen young men and women, who will use their newly acquired skills to help the street kids in coming months.

Five Rochester College students spent part of their summer in Bangkok, Thailand, teaching conversational English using stories from the gospel of Luke. The group read with approximately ninety university age students through contacts with the Thai Christian Center. About half of the Thai College Youth Group at the Center learned about Jesus and were baptized through earlier efforts of the Let's Start Talking program.

## Congregational Connections

September 20-21 are the dates selected for the 75th Anniversary Celebration of the Bristol Road congregation in Flint, Michigan. Information about this special event may be obtained from the Bristol Road web site at [www.churchofchrist.org](http://www.churchofchrist.org) or from the church office at 810.238.9004.

The 40th Annual Midwest Preachers' Retreat will be held September 22-24 at the scenic Wisconsin Christian Youth Camp near Black River Falls, Wisconsin. Featured speaker for the event is Michael Armour. Additional information is available by contacting Monroe Hawley in Milwaukee at 414.281.8667.

October 3-4 are the dates for the Ladies Fall Retreat at the Sherman Lake YMCA near Augusta, Michigan. "Living a Worthy Life" is the theme for the retreat, which is hosted by the ladies of the East Main congregation in Kalamazoo. Ladies should register by September 14 at 269.345.4873.

The 28th Annual Ladies Retreat sponsored by the ladies from the Auburn Hills Church of Christ will take place on October 3-4 at Michigan Christian Youth Camp. Speakers for the weekend include Sandra Jones and Rita Brackney. Call 248.373.7000 to register or for additional information.

Michigan Christian Youth Camp will host its annual Steak Dinner benefit on Saturday, November 1 at the camp near Attica, Michigan. Cost for the event is \$75. Additional information is available by calling MCYC at 810.664.8040.

Two From Galilee will be presented by the Rochester Church of Christ as an outreach to the community on November 13-15 and 20-22. Their annual musical draws over 3,000 individuals. For information, contact Amy Cramp at 248.651.1933.

To submit information about area-wide events or cooperative ministries, contact Elton Albright, Rochester College director of church relations, at 248.218.2022.



Church volunteers sort donated clothing for distribution through the God's Helping Hands ministry.

## Four congregations partner for ministry

Imagine distributing over 28,000 pounds of food and thousands of articles of clothing to over 300 needy families in just one month. Then imagine running that type of ministry on an ongoing basis throughout the year in one of the wealthiest counties in the United States. Such a task sounds either overwhelming or unlikely.

Four Michigan congregations in northern Oakland County have made such a ministry a reality. The Lake Orion, Rochester, Romeo, and Waterford congregations have joined hands over recent years to develop God's Helping Hands, a model benevolence program for needy families.

"All four congregations support God's Helping Hands both financially and with volunteers," stated Lisa Cain, a 1987 graduate of Rochester College who coordinates the ministry with her husband Brian. "Other congregations like Hazel Park have recently donated items and we often pass on large amounts of surplus clothing to the Lemay congregation in Detroit for disbursement in the inner city."

Developing several years ago from a series of modest clothing giveaways hosted by the Lake Orion and Rochester congregations, God's Helping Hands now operates out of a 3,200 square foot facility with storage units that soar twelve feet in the air. The ministry doubled its space about a year ago in order to more efficiently serve the growing number of families that come to them each month.

"Once a month, families are able to come to our facility and receive a supply of food and once every three months they can obtain clothing," stated Mrs. Cain. "Due to the harsh economic times, we have experienced a steady increase in the number of families that need our help. To date we have served over 2,400 families."

Since its inception, God's Helping Hands has provided materials to touch the spiritual lives of the people it serves in addition to helping with their physical needs. Since January, the center has distributed 700 copies of God's Eternal Plan, a new book written by Jerry Tallman, the evangelism minister at the Rochester congregation.

"People are very open to taking Jerry's book," stated Mrs. Cain. "Jerry has been receiving calls from some of the individuals who have read his book. This is just one of the ways we are reaching families."

For further information about God's Helping Hands, you can contact the Cains at [GodsHelpingHands@comcast.net](mailto:GodsHelpingHands@comcast.net).

## Serving Churches

For over 40 years, the Rochester College Bookstore has served churches.

- Bible class literature, communion supplies, Bible correspondence courses, teaching aids, and numerous other items can be purchased through the bookstore.
- Your congregation can provide scholarships for Rochester College students while purchasing items at the same price they would pay to the publisher.
- Bible class literature can be placed on an automatic order system with the bookstore, saving you time and providing you with superior service.

**Rochester College  
Bookstore**

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Please Contact  
Doug Edwards  
248.218.2020  
dedwards@rc.edu

How  
May  
We  
Serve  
You?

If you are interested in Rochester College helping with your congregational efforts, please complete the form below and return it to Elton Albright, Director of Church Relations, Rochester College, 800 West Avon Road, Rochester Hills, MI 48307.

\_\_\_\_\_ Sunday sermon by a college employee or a ministry student  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday or Wednesday Bible class presentation by a college employee or a ministry student  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Workshop conducted by college employees (Bible school teacher training or special topics)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Ladies Day program by a college employee and/or female student leaders  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Estate Planning Seminar (how to plan wills and trusts)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Student group assistance (mini VBS, door knocking, benevolence work, etc.)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Student intern to work with minister or youth group  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Performing group visit (Chorus, Autumn, Company)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Catalog and information from the Rochester College Bookstore

\_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_  
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