

USNS Mercy

As we know, Pastor Kirk has served as a Chaplain in the United States Navy Reserve for 17 years. During that time he has been mobilized once, immediately following 9/11. At that time he was away from FPC providing ministry to those in uniform overseas for 9 months.



Last August, Pastor Kirk received a telephone call from the United States Navy's Military Sealift Command Headquarters, Washington, D.C. He was notified that he had been chosen to serve as the **Command Chaplain aboard the United States Navy Hospital Ship, *Mercy*, on her special humanitarian mission this summer, *Pacific Partnership 2010*.**

The ship will carry a complete Naval hospital to places of acute need across the world, **bringing urgently needed medical care to the sick, the poor, and their children--most of whom have never seen a doctor.** Hospital Ship *Mercy* is known and recognized worldwide; she is painted entirely white and displays large red crosses on both of her sides. *Mercy* is the lead ship of her class of hospital ships in the United States Navy. She was named for the virtue of compassion. In accordance with the Geneva Conventions, USNS *Mercy* and her crew do not carry any ordnance. Firing on *Mercy* is considered a war crime.

Kirk is scheduled to deploy from May 8, likely through September 30. On April 19, the Session of our Church approved a plan for carrying forth the work and mission of FPCW during Pastor Kirk's period of shipboard deployment:

- **The Session remains in charge of the Church, as always, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.**
- Elders Peg Jones and Charlotte Riddle will provide operational oversight on behalf of the Session.
- Pastor Glen Reichelderfer, Associate Pastor at Christ Presbyterian Church in Madison, will serve as substitute Session Moderator, will conduct worship on several Sundays, and will be available to consult as needed. (Pastor Glen is no stranger to FPCW, having served in a similar capacity during Pastor Kirk's nine month mobilization in 2001 and his Sabbatical in 2008.)
- Pastor Susan Vergeront will serve as acting head church administrator for day to day operations. (con't)

As Pastor Kirk, and by extension First Presbyterian Church of Waunakee, is called out to this new field of mission, we at home will have yet another opportunity to remember that God is our strength and our sustainer.

At its August 17, 2009 meeting, the Session of FPC unanimously approved a resolution commending Pastor Kirk Morledge on the honor of his selection as the Command Chaplain for this vital humanitarian mission of the United States Navy and of our Country. The Elders went on record to state that this is a significant outreach of FPC's expanding mission role and that the congregation will directly benefit from his experiences.

Our church, by God's grace and guidance, will continue to grow and move ahead while Kirk is away. The Session is most proud of our senior pastor for this latest achievement and extends sincere congratulations to him.

Pastor Kirk eagerly looks forward to returning to his duties as our Pastor and Head of Staff here at FPC following his deployment for this mission.