

Light of the Northern Plains

Presbytery of the Northern Plains

April 2008

Prayer Concerns

Please lift up in prayer Blair Moorhead, Young Adult Volunteer from our Presbytery serving a year in Kenya.

Carolyn Motter, member of First Presbyterian Church of Colgate, had both knees replaced on February 25 and went home on March 11, 2008. Her left knee isn't doing as well as the right and she is waiting to hear from the surgeon as to what is next. Please keep Carolyn in your prayers during her time of recovery.

Corrine Roy had a stroke on Monday, March 3, 2008. Please keep Corrine and the whole Roy family in your prayers.

The husband of Sharon Norstog, Supply Pastor for First Presbyterian Church of Watford City, Konrad, had surgery at St. Vincent's Hospital in Billings.

Sharon wrote the following update: His surgery went very well. They only had to replace 2 valves instead of 3. We want to thank you and the Presbytery for the prayers that helped so much. Konnie's dr. closed his appointment with us the day before surgery with prayer. We knew for certain Konnie was going to be in good hands - Dr. Davis & God's. We truly have been blessed. Thank you and take care. Yours in Christ, Sharon

Please keep Konrad and the Norstog family in your prayers during this time of recovery.

Jeanne Otterness Hochhalter (daughter of Phyllis Otterness, Clerk of Session of Tower City Presbyterian Church) was diagnosed with a brain tumor. Please keep Jeanne and her whole family in your prayers during this time of uncertainty.



SPRING PRESBYTERY MEETING

The United Presbyterian Church of Jamestown will once again welcome us for the Presbytery meeting on April 25-26, 2008. The meeting will start at 11:00 am (a lunch break

will be provided) in order to conclude the administrative business of the presbytery by 3:30 Friday afternoon. Beginning at 4:00 pm Friday, the gathered body will wrestle with questions about who we are as a presbytery and what God is calling us to do and be.

A Strategic Planning task force appointed by Council last August has been sifting through information to clarify the conversations we most need to have as we look to our future. They'll bring scripture, the Great Ends of the Church, demographic realities in our region, and feedback from churches and clergy to the table and ask us to talk about what it means. All this conversation will be surrounded by worship, song and prayer, asking the Spirit to inspire us with visions for our future.

Being Presbyterian on the plains is a challenge and an adventure. We wonder what tomorrow will hold for us, and how we can support each other as we live into that future. Every person present will be able to help shape our understanding and contribute to the big picture that's forming.

After presbytery, our shared insights will go back to the council for refinement, and by October's meeting, there may be some preliminary conclusions for us to discuss further.

The discernment process is only as strong as those who participate. The planning team promises lively ways to talk and pray together, and hopes that elders and clergy will bring their best energy to this important time together.

In addition, two commissions will take place, one for our General Assembly commissioners and the other for the Kenya Mission trip participants.

Meeting material will be posted on the Presbytery website at www.northernplainspresbytery.com by noon on April 4, 2008 for congregations/individuals to download. For congregations that don't have internet access, packets can be mailed out to them. **We are asking for those congregations to contact the office by 9:00 a.m. on April 16, 2008 to insure you receive your packets in time.** Please call the office at 800-243-3532 or (local) 772-0783 and leave a message for Laurie Elhard, Communication Coordinator.

SUMMER MISSION TRIP PLANS ARE TAKING SHAPE

By: the Rev. David Thompson, Leader of Youth Connection Ministry Team

"It was one of the best trips of my life." "I definitely want to go again!" "Wow, it was awesome!" These are some of the responses from those who have participated in past mission trips with our Presbytery. This year's trip looks to provide the same type of responses.

We invite all 9th grade youth (entering this fall) through adults to join us for our annual Presbytery summer mission trip to California and Oregon from July 17-28. We will be leading Bible school in several Presbyterian churches in those areas, specifically McCloud, California, and Oakland, Oregon. We will also be visiting the Pacific Ocean and beautiful Crater Lake. If you are interested in going with us please contact Pastor Dave Thompson at the United Presbyterian Church in Jamestown. He can be reached at (701) 252-1748 or at dthompson@daktel.com. The cost of the trip is \$150/person and will include bus transportation, food, and lodging (sleeping arrangements will be on the floors in churches). Space is limited and is filling up quickly! This is a trip you won't want to miss!

MEETING LOCATION CHANGE

The Fall Presbytery meeting on October 3 & 4, 2008 location has been changed from First Presbyterian Church of Minot to First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead due to a scheduling conflict.

In the Fargo-Moorhead area hotel rooms on Friday night are booked months in advance. Please make hotel reservations as soon as possible to make sure you get one. One hotel close to the church is the Travelodge (218- 233-5333), make sure to let them know you are traveling for business and you will get a reduced rate of \$71.95 plus tax per night.

Synod School 2008



"So many people having so much fun while examining issues related to faith."

July 27-August 1, 2008
Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, Iowa

Go to www.lakesandprairies.org/school.html
or phone 1-800-328-1880, ext. 207.

Coloring Outside the Lines

QUILTERS GROUP IN BOTTINEAU MISSION TO OTHERS

Bottineau United Parish Quilters Group delivered handmade quilts to each of our members or charges at the local Good Samaritan Center - Bottineau. This was a project they decided to do and all of the recipients were surprised. There were many smiles and laughs and a few tears as well.



Quilting Group Members (left to right) Dorothy Beyer, Helen Kippen, Helen Patterson, Clarien Jostad, Marsha Martin, Karol Patterson, Linda Kyle. Not pictured – Mary Russell, Gloria Olson, Peggy Nelson and Shari Turner



Willard Dempsey, Hazel Dempsey, Karol Patterson and Doris Brown.



Willy Hiatt

PRESBYTERIANS FOR RESTORING CREATION DO NOT GAMBLE WITH GOD'S HANDIWORK



By: John G. Gibbs,
SCE for PNP

Presbyterians are widely opposed to gambling with money (at least, not great gobs of it). We generally choose not to risk thereby the health of

our communities, our families, and our futures.

On the other hand: To proceed “business-as-usual” with human-caused greenhouse gas emissions, and to make the unsubstantiated claim (against contrary evidence) that they are not contributing to climate change, is to gamble with the health of the globe, and the future of all life.

Who has proven that the unprecedented population of 6.5 billion humans, not to mention their growing addictions to fossil fuels, has made no adverse impact on their environment? Where is the evidence that contradicts internationally developed scientific consensus in this matter?

Presbyterians who commit to restoring creation take seriously the public checks and balances that scientific method provides. They know that science is not a subjective enterprise, but a set of undertakings by specialized communities that cross national, linguistic, and cultural boundaries. They “listen up” when the use of that method by scientists across the globe demonstrates human causes of our rapidly deteriorating global climate. They pay attention to massive evidence already at hand.

They do not dismiss the National Academy of Sciences’ analysis of climate change science, and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (in 2006), and the Stern Review Report on the Economics of Climate Change (in November 2006), and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s 4 reports in 2007 – to mention only four important scientific reports about human causes of global warming. [The PRC Link at our presbytery’s website www.northernplainspresbytery.com has links to each of these reports.]

In light of that evidence we choose not to gamble with the creation, as if it were at our disposal without regard to the Creator. We choose not to gamble on the global scale. We determine in our social and economic policies to safeguard the world. We proactively protect our great-grandchildren’s future – and even the immediate future of our children.

RESOURCES

Are You Running with Me, Jesus? Deeply personal prayers containing a struggle of courage and agony. (BK3379)

In Times Like These: How We Pray. A variety of individuals tell stories of how they pray, how they began or stopped praying, and how prayer saved their lives. (BK3384)

Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America by Barbara Ehrenreich. The author, a reporter, examines first hand how to survive on \$6 an hour, revealing low-wage America in a book that is changing the way America perceives its working poor. (BK3370)

Prayer is a Place: America's Religious Landscape Observed by Phyllis Tickle. The author writes of her face-to-face meetings with the Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and the Chief Mullah of Jerusalem, and reminds readers that reverence can be expressed in many different forms and in many different settings. (BK3382)

Walking the Path Jesus Walked (DVD, 24 minutes). In this video, Christians from Egypt, Palestine, and Syria talk about their lives and their faith communities, many of which follow traditions that stretch back to the time of Christ. Christians talk about how their faith calls them to model Jesus Christ, speaking out against--and resisting--injustice nonviolently and relating to people of other faiths in a peaceful manner.

The Puzzle Club, a DVD which takes you into the world of people dealing with brain injuries, so that you can really understand the changes and challenges in their life.

For Children

The Secret of Saying Thanks by Douglas Wood. A spiritual homage to nature and the world that offers the promise of discovery of the happiest secret of all. (CL244)

Butterflies Under Our Hats by Sandy Sasso. A story inspired by a Jewish folktale about a town where everything always went wrong. (CL251)

To borrow a resource, contact the **Resource Center for Churches** at info@resourcesforthejourney.org or telephone (888) 293-9901 (toll free). The staff will gladly reserve one of these or another resource for you. The center has books, DVDs, reference works, choir anthems, and even a labyrinth available for loan.



MEETINGS, MEETINGS AND MORE MEETINGS

By: *The Rev. Dr. D. Matt Stith, First Presbyterian Church of West Fargo*

Someone once described Presbyterianism as “a series of meetings occasionally interrupted by a worship service.” While this phrase is clearly intended to be tongue-in-cheek, there is some truth lurking in there, too. This truth seems especially apparent in our house these days. Along with the usual round of meetings that I attend within our church—session, confirmation, worship committee—I also have a monthly meeting with the other Presbyterian pastors in the area, meetings of the presbytery and of the three presbytery committees and ministry teams on which I serve, and now have added another session meeting as well: I am currently serving as Moderator of the session of

Westminster Presbyterian Church in Casselton, now that their pastor has moved on to a new call. Throw in Toni’s meetings and the kids’ activities, and we spend an awful lot of time working our schedule around one meeting or another.

But why do we meet so much within the church? And why do I end up having so many meetings outside our congregation? The answers to these questions point out some of the most distinctive and powerful features of our Presbyterian identity.

First, our congregational life is indeed shaped and guided by meetings. Whether it be the session, the boards of deacons or building trustees, or any of the several committees that we have constituted, we try to make all of the important decisions in the life of the church in groups. This is because, to be frank, we are all flawed and fallible, our vision distorted by sin. By coming together to try to discern God’s will for us, we do our best to cancel out the errors that we as individuals inevitably make. In other words, if 9 elders of session believe that God is calling us to a certain decision, we are more confident in that discernment than if only one person believed it. As Presbyterians, we believe that the best way to faithfully respond to God’s call is to be guided in that response by a group who are particularly chosen for that responsibility.

But what of meetings outside the congregation? Why do I, along with several other members of our church, spend so much time engaging in conversations and decisions at the presbytery level? The answer, put most succinctly, is that we are a connectional church. We believe that we are not simply called to be members of one particular congregation, but rather that we are also called to be members of a larger church, one that can reach farther into the needs of the world, and accomplish more than any individual congregation can alone.

The examples of this expanded reach are many. Our partnership with the Chogoria presbyteries in Kenya, our support of various relief and mission efforts through One Great Hour of Sharing, the youth retreat that our young folks enjoy in Jamestown every year, and Presbyterian Clearwater Forest Bible Camp are just the tip of the iceberg.

What may well be even more important is the way our connectional nature allows us to help and support other congregations in time of need, showing the world that we are indeed the One Body of Christ, as he wishes us to be. My service to Casselton is the same that their former pastor, Kari Jutila, offered to our church in the time before I came to serve here. And whenever there are transitions in the lives of the churches of our presbytery, or indeed anywhere in our denomination, people like us, acting through committees and boards of presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly, will be there to join with our brothers and sisters in discerning God’s will for them and his call to the church.

I guess all those meetings aren’t so bad, after all.

Presbytery’s Calendar

April 10	GFAC CC
April 11-13	Youth Retreat
April 12	PW Gathering
April 15	COM by CC
April 25-26	Presbytery Meeting at United Presbyterian Church, Jamestown
April 26	Staff Meeting
May 12	Staff Reviews
May 20	COM by VCS
May 26	Holiday – Office Closed
May 29	Council Meeting

CC = Conference Call
VCS = Video Conferencing Sites

Presbytery office information:

Address: 5555 South Washington Suite 115
Grand Forks, ND 58201
Phone #: 701-772-0783
Toll Free: 800-243-3532
Fax #: 701-775-7599

The Presbytery office will normally be open Monday thru Friday 9:00 am to 4:30 pm. Due to flexible schedules and vacation time of the staff, please call before stopping by to make sure someone will be at the office.

Light of the Northern Plains is published under the Mission Advocacy Ministry Team (MAMT) of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains.

Chuck Traylor, Executive Presbyter
Steve Shive, MAMT Moderator
Laurie Elhard, Communications Coordinator

Other contributors: Matt Stith, John Gibb, David Thompson, Tom Lavery and Gretchen Graf.

A copy deadline for the *Light* is the twenty fifth of the month. Item maybe sent to:
Laurie Elhard
Presbytery of the Northern Plains
5555 South Washington Suite
Grand Forks, ND 58201
701-772-0783
pnpooffice@gmail.com