

Light of the Northern Plains

Presbytery of the Northern Plains

April 2009

PRAYER CONCERNS

Cheryl Resnick, sister of Nancy Emerson, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead, has been hospitalized due to minor bleeding in the brain. Cheryl will undergo a surgical procedure on April 5th to relieve the pressure of the bleeding. Nancy is flying to Peoria to be with her sister and family. Please keep Cheryl, Nancy and their whole family in your prayers.

Please hold our Chogoria partners in your prayers as they deal with drought and famine. More info about this crisis on page 2.

Please keep everyone in your prayers who are dealing with the widespread flooding in our Presbytery.

MANY IMPORTANT ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED AT SPRING PRESBYTERY MEETING

By: *Michael Lochow, Stated Clerk*

The 97th Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains will be held at United Presbyterian Church in Jamestown, North Dakota, on Friday and Saturday, April 24 - 25, 2009. Registration will begin at 11:00 a.m. with adjournment planned for about Noon on Saturday.

This meeting will easily have more important items which should catch your attention than most. Please review the agenda and come prepared.

First of all, we will be voting on the proposed amendments to the Book of Order. We got a preview in January at Mendenhall Presbyterian Church and the formal debate and vote will take place at this meeting.

Secondly, the Interim Executive Presbyter Search Committee is expected to report and present the name of the proposed Interim EP for your discussion and approval.

Finally, the Minot Church will present a resolution asking the Presbytery to overture the 219th General Assembly to allow middle governing bodies to withhold per capita as a matter of conscience. The next General Assembly will be held in Minneapolis in 2010.

So, lots to study, think about and come prepared to talk about.

Presbytery packets are no longer mailed out to congregations. Instead,

all Presbytery meeting materials will be posted on the Presbytery website for congregations/individuals to download. Meeting material will be posted on the Presbytery website at <http://www.northernplainspresbytery.com> by noon on April 8, 2009.

For congregations that don't have internet access, packets can be mailed out to them. **If your congregation needs a packet you must contact the Presbytery office by 9:00 am on April 17, 2009 to ensure you receive the packet in time.**

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Laurie Elhard at 701-772-0783, or toll free at 800-243-3532, or by email at pnpooffice@gmail.com

PRESBYTERY COUNCIL AWARDS MISSION GRANTS

By: Gretchen Graf, Chair of Budget and Finance

In March the Council had the joy of awarding the first mission grants to three congregations. Hope Korean Presbyterian Church received \$2000 for their ministry to Korean-speaking college students in Grand Forks, East Grand Forks, and Crookston. Church members bring students to Friday youth meeting and Sunday worship and provide Korean food after both services each week. Many students are making commitments to Christ because of the fellowship and training the church provides.

The Bismarck and Mandan congregations applied jointly for \$2000 for an educational program to combat eating disorders. The Bismarck church also received \$3000 to assist with an adult mission trip in the fall to New Orleans, where volunteers will continue with the effort to rebuild that community.

While some additional grants are in the process, other applications are welcome. A total of \$28,000 is available this calendar year to support new work by congregations or presbytery teams. The audience for the granted project should be persons beyond the church membership. Existing programs or building projects are not eligible for grants. Apply by sending a letter describing the project and the financial needs to the presbytery office at 5555 South Washington Street Suite A, Grand Fork, ND 58201.



FLOOD RESPONSE TEAM FORMED

In the wake (no pun intended) and the midst of our current high water events, the moderator of the presbytery has appointed a 'Flood response team' for the purpose of responding to the needs of our communities. The members of this team are: Daniel Wolpert (First Presbyterian Church of Crookston), Vicki Rucker (First Presbyterian Church of Bismarck), George O'Neill (First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead), Fred MacGregor (First Presbyterian Church of Grand Forks), and Chair Gretchen Graf (First Presbyterian Church of Grand Forks). The team is also served by staff members, Laurie Elhard and Michael Lochow. The team's existence will be formally blessed at our next presbytery meeting.

We began our work with a video and conference call meeting on Monday March 31, 2009. We were joined at the meeting by Jim and Katrine Anderson from PDA who have been in the Fargo/Moorhead area since Thursday 3/26.

At this first meeting we caught up on all the events of the past week or so as well as the current flood situations. The fact that things seem to be heading in a good direction is a blessing to us all, and certainly contributed to a positive feeling about where we are at this week. Of course, we are all aware that things can change rapidly.

We also heard from the PDA folks about the \$10,000 grant that we have already been awarded to deal with immediate unmet needs such as food, shelter etc.

Some of the current tasks of the team include checking on various churches that we haven't heard from, keeping tabs on the Fargo/Moorhead area, connecting with existing volunteer assignment agencies, and coordinating any incoming requests.

If you do know of any flood related concerns, we ask that you route these to the presbytery office where Laurie can pass them onto the Team. At this point we ask that all people in the region hold each other up in prayer, especially those that have been most affected by the flooding.

Blessings in Christ,

The Flood Response Team

FAMINE IN KENYA – NEWS FROM OUR CHOGORIA PARTNERS



The combination of the failure of the seasonal rains and the displacement of many farmers during last year's violent protests has driven Kenya into a terrible drought and famine. A recent estimate is that 10 million people are in immediate danger of starvation. By God's grace, most of our friends in Chogoria are still able to find food and drinking water, but the crisis is certainly felt there, too. In the words of our partners,

"We had rains for two days but it is again very hot and dry. The famine is looming in all parts of Kenya. This is due to crop failure due to insufficient rains in November and December. The Government has declared it a Natural Disaster. We thank God that we can still survive although some parts of the country life has been lost." - Festse Nkonge, Chogoria Central Presbytery, Jan. 29, 2009

"The drought which has caused famine is being experience all over but not very bad at Chogoria where there is food though a bit expensive. The feeding programmes in schools are becoming very hard for the parents are not expecting to pay extra money though prices of maize and beans have almost doubled."

"Tharaka area is most affected. On Saturday I have plans of visiting Makengi and Iruri Primary Schools which are at the border of our district and Tharaka but worse even more than Tharaka. Last time we were there Millicent had taken bananas to them and I had some materials for the nursery class. I have a few old clothes to give the children and hope to solicit for some food to take to them. Millicent is working with Pamela, a health worker there to take care of health issues since they have to travel a long distance to Kajiampau for treatment. - David Mbae, Jan. 1, 2009

"Water levels have gone down and it is quite dry. We sent some clothes left by the Jamestown student nurses to Tharaka on Saturday. On 15th April Chogoria Gideon's Camp will visit an IDP Camp (Internally Displaced Persons) at Mai Mahiu in Naivasha. The churches around have started donating items and we have several bags of old clothing. - David Mbae, March 15, 2009

Please hold our partners in prayer as they work to reach out to so many people among them who are in need. Pray for rain as this is the rainy season. Pray that the people in Chogoria Presbytery who are able to gather food and clothing for those in need will continue to have the strength to carry on. Pray a prayer of gratitude for these good people in Chogoria who are reaching out to the internally displaced people who have suffered loss of home and livelihood from the 2008 post-election violence.

At the Presbytery meeting in April, there will be ways in which we, as a presbytery, can come together to support our brothers and sisters in Christ in the Chogoria Presbytery. In the meantime, please pray!

ALL THINGS NEW!

Are you a person who suspects that the church must change in response to a new century, but you're not sure just what that means? Would you like to be in conversation about what works and what doesn't as the local church reaches out to your community? Would you like to share ideas with like-minded people?

Join the new Google Group **All Things New!**

This group is sponsored by the Synod of Lake and Prairies for church members and pastors who care about the future of the church and want to discuss new ways of being in ministry.

Although membership requires an invitation, all those requesting membership will be added to the group. Request your invitation to the group today by sending an email to: Gretchen Graf at ggraf@gra.midco.net or Cheryl Biller at cheryl@plantproinc.com.

“LIVING IN A MATERIAL WORLD”

Youth Retreat – April 17-19, 2009



The Presbytery of the Northern Plains Youth Retreat will be held on April 17-19, 2009, at Crystal Springs Camp (40 miles west of Jamestown).

During the weekend, the youth will explore what it means to be a Christian in our Material World. Advertisers tell us that to be successful we have to wear the right clothes, drive the coolest cars, live in the biggest house, and be the most athletic. Throughout the weekend we will use large group sessions, small cell groups, games, skits, and other activities to help us better understand what God has to say about all this “stuff.” This is a topic that we can all relate to.

Who Can Come? All 6th grade through 12th grade youth are invited to come. Friends are welcome!

When Is It? The retreat will begin with registration at 7:15 pm on Friday, April 17, 2009, and will conclude after worship on Sunday, April 19, 2009.

How Much Is It? The cost of the entire weekend is only \$75. This includes lodging, food, and program expenses. Checks can be made payable and sent to the United Presbyterian Church, 302 2nd Avenue SE, Jamestown, ND 58401. Financial assistance is available.

What Do I Need to Bring? Sleeping bag and pillow (mattresses provided). Clothing, toiletries, and towel, Bible, notebook, and pen/pencil. Homework, if needed (free time will be provided).

For more information, go to the Presbytery's website at www.northernplainspresbytery.com or contact Pastor Dave at United Presbyterian Church of Jamestown at 701-252-1748.

RESOURCES

Great Themes of the Bible, Volume 1 (Book)

By: W. Eugene March

This first volume in an exciting new series for laity provides an accessible study of some of the Bible's most important themes. Respected professor and author Eugene March traces the understanding of key themes through the Old and New Testaments, such as God, covenant, and sin, and demonstrates their importance for Christian life today. Discussion questions are included in each chapter to enhance the usefulness of this book for church study groups. The themes discussed in Volume one are God, covenant, humanity, sin, law, Messiah, Spirit, grace, salvation, people of God, worship, service, and reign of God.

A very present help: Psalms studies for older adults (Book)

By: Dunson, Miriam

Finally, here is a Bible study guide that relates scripture to the unique needs of older people; one where God's story in scripture and the stories of older people find real connection.

Windows on the World of Jesus: Time Travel to Ancient Judea (Book)

By: Bruce J. Malina

George Smith, a twentieth-century American, moved into a house with a large vineyard in the Eastern Mediterranean during the first century A.D., going back in time and space. He needed help on his land and requested that individuals interested in work be at his place at 9 a.m. on August 8. No one showed up. Why not? This is just one of the sixty fun-to-read 'windows' Bruce Malina cleverly presents in this book that explains the customs and culture of the world in which Jesus lived and taught. Each adventure depicts a twentieth-century North American encountering puzzling practices while visiting Judea during ancient times. These vignettes offer quick and easy access to the first-century Mediterranean world and relate to segments of the New Testament and other passages from the same cultural area.

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. For a complete listing of resources, go to: <http://resourcesforthejourney.org/>

It's not too late to register!! R.A.S.C.A.L.'s inaugural retreat,

**“On Reformed Spirituality”
with Prof. Gary Hansen
May 1st and 2nd in Devils Lake.**

You are invited to join with friends and colleagues as we learn together from the wealth of our spiritual tradition.

The weekend includes:

Friday afternoon –

Conference Check in from 1 to 2 PM at Fireside Inn & Suites (Motel check in is 2 PM but some rooms may be ready earlier) Presentations begin approximately 2:00 PM.

The Friday afternoon and evening program:

- Reformed Spirituality, Part I: Minds shaped by Scripture
- Reformed Spirituality, Part II: Hands joined in Community
- Reformed Spirituality, Part III: Souls known by self-examination

Saturday morning –

Breakfast at the motel. Check out. Gather at the Devils Lake Presbyterian Church for Saturday segments beginning at 9:30 am.

The Saturday morning program:

- Reformed Spirituality, Part IV: Hearts steeped in the Psalms
- Reformed Spirituality, Part V: Lives lived in the rhythm of Sabbath

The Friday evening meal is on your own, but arrangements have been made for a private room for the group at The Pizza Ranch adjacent to our motel. They have a pizza buffet as well as salad bar and soup.

Saturday breakfast is the breakfast at the motel included in your room price.

Register for the retreat with the Presbytery office. Book your own room at the Fireside Inn and Suites 701-662-6760 (tell them you are with R.A.S.C.A.L.).

For more information contact Paul Kuhn or the Presbytery office.

Registration form

Complete this form and send with your \$35 registration fee (payable to the Presbytery of the Northern Plains) to:

RASCAL
Presbytery of the Northern Plains
5555 South Washington Street, Suite A
Grand Forks, ND 58201

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Presbytery's Calendar

- April 8 Presbytery packets posted online to download
- April 10 Good Friday – Office closed
- April 17-19 Spring Youth Retreat at Crystal Springs Camp
- April 20 Flood Response Team Mtg
- April 23 Budget & Finance Mtg
- April 24 COM Mtg
RASCALS Mtg
CPM Mtg
- April 24-25 Spring Presbytery Meeting at United Presbyterian Church of Jamestown
- May 1-2 Reformed Spiritually at Fireside Inn & Suites in Devils Lake
- May 25 Memorial Day – Office closed
- June 6 Council Mtg
- Aug 27 Council Mtg
- Aug 28-30 Prayer Retreat at Red Willow Bible Camp

CC = Conference Call
VCS = Video Conferencing Sites

PNP vision statement:

“A vibrant, informed, Presbyterian community which nourishes ministry and joins in Christ’s mission.”

Would you like to receive the Light of the Northern Plains electronically? You can by signing up for the paperless edition. It costs nothing. To sign up, simply email pnpoffice@gmail.com and request to be put on the electronic newsletter list.

Light of the Northern Plains is published under the Council of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains.

Laurie Elhard, Communications Coordinator

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A copy deadline for the Light is the twenty-fifth of the month. Items may be sent to:

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