

Light of the Northern Plains

Presbytery of the Northern Plains

December 2009

PRAY CONCERNS

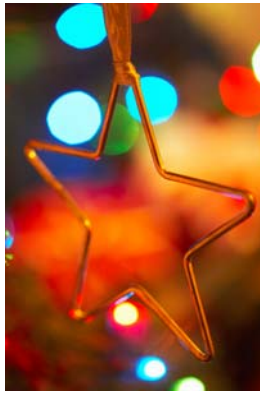
Arabella Meadows-Rogers, former Executive Presbyter of Northern Plains, was diagnosed with pancreatic/liver cancer in late 2007 and since then she has been having intensive chemo treatments. Arabella this summer has stepped down as Executive Presbyter of the Presbytery of New York City and is now on disability. If you would like to send cards, her current address is: 70 Haven Avenue, #2C NYC, NY 10032. Please keep Arabella and her entire family in your prayers during this time.

Please hold our Chogoria partners in your prayers as they deal with drought and famine.

Please hold in your prayers all people dealing with health, financial and family issues.

WINTER PRESBYTERY MEETING

The Winter Presbytery Meeting location has been changed to First Presbyterian Church of Grand Forks on February 5 & 6, 2010.



PATIENTLY WAITING

By: The Rev. Dr. Steve Minnema, Interim Executive Presbyter

Each year for the past twenty-five years, I have written a Christmas poem that I send out to family and friends as a way both to wish them the best of the season and to report on our highlights from the past year. This year's version is not complete as yet – I still have time! – but the first two lines are done and,

*As Advent climbs the tower of time to toll our
waiting hours,
There comes a tender yearning for the hope this
watch empowers.*

possibly, worth sharing with you:

Advent is a time of waiting and watching, a time when the tender yearning for new hope can ripen into an empowering confidence that we and our future are in God's good and strong hands and that, because of that, we can recommit ourselves to being faithful and positive servants, in our families, our churches, our presbytery, our communities and our world.

Such a ripening is never automatic. It does not come to pass merely by wishing it to be so. It does not develop without the investment of our selves, without high costs paid or lessons learned the hard way. No! It is difficult to watch and wait in a dark time when the signs are bad and there is no way of knowing, *for certain*, that what we desperately need will be provided.

Persons facing grave personal crises that tempt them toward hopelessness know about this. Churches and presbyteries struggling

against trends that seem to be moving in the wrong direction know about this. And citizens deeply concerned about large public issues clearly needing more creative attention than they are now receiving know about this. How, indeed, can the desire for new hope lead to the reality of new hope in such debilitating circumstances?

The short answer is that if the desire for new hope leads us to refuse the temptations to hopelessness that are all around us and to turn instead to the Ultimate Source of all hope it will, if we can be patient, bring us at last to the reality of new hope and energy for our lives (and for our churches.) The "tender yearning" I mention in my poem can, I believe, move us to open our Bibles in search of a word that will restore our confidence that we are, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, under the careful watch of our Maker. Such a word might be something like this from Psalm 86:7: "In the day of my trouble I call on you, for you will answer me."

One thing has always seemed clear to me. Christians who neglect the Word of God put themselves in danger of a spiritual malaise that can harm their lives, their relationships and their discipleship. Advent, this season of hard waiting, is a great invitation both to desire and find something much better.

MISSION CHALLENGE '09 UPDATE



Chenoa Stock, Co-Mission Worker in Sri Lanka visiting Bill and Marjorie Hazard farm near Cooperstown, ND during the '09 Mission Challenge.

Presbyterians are at work around the world and at our October Presbytery Meeting we celebrated Mission Challenge '09 with Chenoa Stock. Stock is a missionary in Sri Lanka, an island in the Indian Ocean, south of India.

A total of 152 presbyteries hosted a mission speaker during the four-week Challenge. Forty-six mission workers participated in the Challenge.

PC(USA) missionaries are doing an impressive job of communicating the love of Christ through listening to the needs and wants of the people, then working among them to address their concerns or to help with key issues.

Letter to Northern Plains -

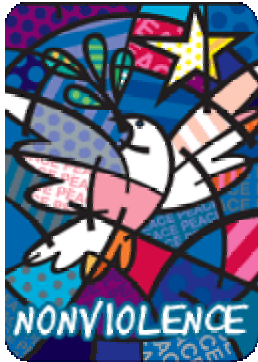
Dear Presbytery of the Northern Plains,

Thank you so much for allowing me to share my work in Sri Lanka with your members. I know you had a very busy agenda, so I am very grateful for the time, attention and responsiveness that was granted to me. I have enjoyed visiting some of your churches during the PC(USA)'s Mission Challenge. Thanks again.
Peace, Chenoa Stock

Reflections from mission workers

After an entire day of meetings at Northern Plains Presbytery (and still continuing on after my presentation), they were so very responsive and attentive. One man even told me I was the best part of the day! Though I knew they were tired, I felt I had their interest while I spoke. Chenoa Stock

2010 MARKS PEACEMAKING 30TH ANNIVERSARY



The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program invites you to give thanks for peacemakers and peacemaking ministries past, present and future! 2010 marks the 30th anniversary of *Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling*, the General Assembly statement that called for a new emphasis on peacemaking across the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and led to the creation of the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program and the Peacemaking Offering. This is a time to celebrate peacemaking ministries of the past, affirm peacemaking ministries of the present and look forward to future peacemaking ministries as we follow Jesus Christ.

The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program was created in 1980 by action of the General Assembly of the former United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America when it adopted *Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling*. It was created to support the efforts of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to live out a deeper commitment to peacemaking as part of our faithfulness to God. It is one of four special offerings designated by PC(USA).

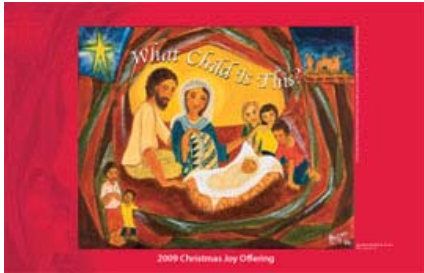
The work of the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program is guided by three affirmations outlined in *Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling*:

- The church is faithful to Jesus Christ when it is engaged in peacemaking.
- The church is obedient to Jesus Christ when it nurtures and equips God's people as peacemakers.
- The church bears witness to Christ when it nurtures the moral life of the nation for the sake of peace in the world.

The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program has been helping the church grow in its witness and commitment to peacemaking. The PC(USA) has developed a variety of resources, events and programs that assists the church as it responds to the gospel calling to "Seek peace and pursue it."

Each congregation is encouraged to retain 25 percent of the Offering it receives to use for local ministries of peacemaking with the church and its community. Twenty-five percent is used by presbyteries and synod, and 50 percent is used by the General Assembly ministries through the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program.

HISTORY OF THE CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING



Presbyterians have long celebrated the birth of Jesus Christ by giving generously to an Advent offering. The Christmas Joy Offering dates back to the 1930s when the former Presbyterian

Church in the United States (PCUS) began an offering to supplement inadequate retirement income and provide supplemental medical insurance for former ministers, missionaries, church workers, and their families. It was first officially called the Joy Gift in 1949.

In the former United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (UPCUSA), a Christmas offering was first taken in 1960. Called the White Gift, its funds were used for general mission and world relief. In 1964 the name was changed to the Christmas Offering, and receipts provided support for health and welfare concerns related to children. The emphasis on global work with children continued until 1973, when the offering was used to assist former servants of the church who were living on inadequate pensions. In 1974 racial ethnic education was added, and in 1979 nursing home care assistance was also included. Funds were distributed evenly between the Board of Pensions and racial ethnic education.

In 1988 the PCUS and the UPCUSA offerings were joined into one offering, the Christmas Offering Joy Gift. It was agreed that neither the [Board of Pensions](#) nor the [racial ethnic schools](#) would suffer in the merger of the Joy Gift and the Christmas Offering. In 1989 the offering was renamed the Christmas Joy Offering, and in 1991 the 203rd General Assembly changed the distribution of funds to 50 percent to the Board of Pensions and 50 percent to the Presbyterian racial ethnic schools and colleges.

MISSION YEARBOOKS AVAILABLE

You can purchase the 2010 Mission Yearbook and Children's Mission Yearbook for a discounted price by contacting the Presbytery office. Mission Yearbooks are \$5.00 each and Children's Yearbooks are \$6.00 each, plus postage. Supplies are limited, so act fast.

The Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study inspires thousands of Presbyterians daily as they uphold the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in prayer. This everyday practice helps encourage new relationships and enhances those already established between presbyteries and partners overseas.

If you are interested, please contact the Presbytery office at 701-772-0783 or email pnppoffice@gmail.com

RESOURCES

Better Than Success: Eight Principles of Faithful Leadership (Book)

This book establishes a definition for faithful leadership focused on a biblical and theological perspective.

Creative Ideas for Epiphany (Book)

This book includes intergenerational events, worship ideas, activity projects, youth programs, lesson plans, stories, and many other ideas for use during the Epiphany season.

Family Friendly Ideas Your Church Can Do (Book)

Creative, fun ways to help church families grow stronger, spend time together and get closer to each other. Fifty great activities including: Family service projects; Learning and worship; enrichment activities; and fantastic family fun.

Giving Good Gifts: The Spiritual Journey of Parenthood (Book)

Developing spiritual gifts in children is one of the most important principles of good parenting. George Conway uses scriptural insights and personal anecdotes to identify seven gifts that parents can give to their children to help them form healthy spiritual identities. "Giving Good Gifts" describes how providing our children with these gifts enables us to experience parenting as its own spiritual journey.

Innovative Church: Seven Steps to Positive Change in Your Congregation (Book)

Author Merton P. Strommen analyzes the need for change in congregations, shows why change is difficult, and offers a seven-step strategy for innovation.

To borrow this or a different 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/>

2010 PER CAPITA

2010 Per Capita will remain the same as 2009. The per capita apportionment is based on the funds necessary for the Presbytery/Synod/General Assembly to do their essential ecclesiastical work.

2010 Per Capita Apportionment breakdown:

General Assembly	\$ 6.15
Synod of Lakes & Prairies	\$ 4.80
Northern Plains Presbytery	<u>\$31.00</u>
Total 2010 Per Capita	\$41.95

The 2010 apportionment is based on a church's membership as of December 31, 2008 as reported in the 2008 General Assembly Minutes (Part 11, Statistics).

SEMINARY ON THE PRAIRIE

Preaching? Me? Up front?

January 30-31, 2010

Lay leaders and pastors are invited to Red Willow to explore the joys and struggles of writing sermons. If you have ever wondered how a sermon is put together or you've ever wanted to try your hand at writing a sermon, this event is for you! Pastors will share their insights on what works and what doesn't work in the sermon writing process.

Participants will also work on a scripture text and prepare an actual sermon. Sunday morning will provide opportunities to preach the sermon. If you prefer not to preach, no worry! Plan to worship and hear the sermons other participants have written.

Tuition: \$15 if you register on or before January 15th, \$25 after January 15th

Meals: \$8.00 for breakfasts; \$10.00 for lunches and dinners

Lodging: \$25 for 1 night, \$15 for the second night
Contact the camp office to reserve your room.

To register, visit [Tri-County Ministry's website](#).

REFORMED AND REFORMING: NURTURING A PRESBYTERIAN IDENTITY IN OUR CONGREGATIONS

A workshop for Pastors and Commissioned Lay Pastors (Presbyterian and otherwise) serving Presbyterian congregations will be held on April 18-19, 2010 at the Maryvale Spiritual Life Center in Valley City, ND.

The goal is to provide a high quality training and support experience for pastors and commissioned lay pastors serving churches on the Great Plains that seek to strengthen their identity as congregations in the Reformed/Presbyterian Family.

The cost is \$60 which includes: Sunday evening meal, overnight lodging, all Monday meals and a copy, to be sent to participants upon registration, of Donald McKim's *Presbyterian Questions: Presbyterian Answers*.)

If you are interested, please contact the Presbytery office at 701-772-0783 or email pnpooffice@gmail.com.

Presbytery's Calendar

Dec 1	Staff Mtg by VC CLP Task Force Mtg
Dec 8	COM Training at United Presbyterian Church of Jamestown
Dec 24-25	Office Closed
Dec 31	Office Closed
Jan 1	Office Closed
Jan 9	Budget & Finance Mtg
Jan 10	Mark, Frueh, Marv Wierenga, Jr. & Donna Marsland recommissioning at First Presbyterian Church of Minot
Jan 14	Council Mtg
Jan 19	Staff Mtg
Jan 25-29	COM/CPM Synod Training
Feb 5-6	Winter Presbytery Mtg at First Presbyterian Church of Grand Forks
Mar 12-13	COM Retreat at Chieftain Conference Center in Carrington
Apr 18-19	Reformed & Reforming Workshop at Maryvale Spiritual Life Center in Valley City

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 pnpooffice@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.

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