

Light of the Northern Plains

Presbytery of the Northern Plains

June 2008

Prayer Concerns

Cori Kaufmann, Parish Nurse for LAKE REGION PRES. PARISH (Devils Lake, Minneukan, Webster and Bdecan) and the wife of CLP Kevin Kaufmann, was transferred by ambulance on May 22nd from Altru Hospital in Grand Forks to Abbot Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis. She was admitted to Neuro ICU and immediately taken into surgery to repair a brain aneurysm. The surgery went very well. She is alert and visiting. She was to be released on May 27th. Please keep Cori in your prayers during this time of recovery.

Chuck Traylor's sister-in-law, Captain Leigh Traylor is stationed near Baghdad, Iraq as head nurse of one of the Army hospital wards caring for Iraqi Prisoners of War. Leigh came down with a respiratory infection that generated a severe cough. The family has received good news and she is cleared to return to theater (Iraq). Please keep Leigh and all the soldiers in your prayers.

Cathy Bliss's, CLP for First Presbyterian Church of Wilton, mother died Sunday morning, April 27, 2008. Over the past couple of months Cathy had been her mother's main care giver which she states has "been a very precious time." Please keep Cathy and her whole family in your prayers during this time.

JAMESTOWN CHURCH HOSTS 94TH STATED MEETING



LaMoure Readers Theater presented "Christ in the Concrete City"

The Ninety-Fourth Stated meeting of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains was held on April 25-26, 2008, at the United Presbyterian Church of Jamestown, North Dakota. The members of the LaMoure Readers Theater presented "Christ in the Concrete City" as the opening worship

The meeting was a combined business meeting and a program presented by the Visioning Task Force. All commissioners and

visitors participated in the visioning exercises. The meeting concluded with the commissioning of the Chogoria travelers and the General Assembly commissioners.

One of the highlights was the announcement of the visit of The Rev. Joan S. Gray, Moderator of the 217th General Assembly, on June 4th and 5th. She will begin her visit at Jamestown College on June 4th. Her schedule will also include a visit to the Bdecan Presbyterian Church at Tokio, North Dakota, on Thursday, June 5th and end with a reception and banquet at First Presbyterian Church in Grand Forks.

There had been some recent concern about the political situation in Kenya and the effect it might have on the Chogoria summer mission trip. The Rev. Matt Stith reported that there has been dramatic improvement in the political situation and the committee is confident they can proceed with their trip as originally planned. Eleven members of Presbytery will be leaving at the end of July for three weeks.

The Nominating Committee has filled their two vacant positions with the election of Joanne Zutz from Red Lake Falls and Edie Wagar from Towner.

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry presented Curtis Brophy and asked that he be received as an inquirer. Curtis talked about his life's journey to this point. He will be enrolled at Dubuque Seminary this fall. Following his talk the commissioners unanimously approved the request of the Committee.

Mary Holtey, chair of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, informed the meeting that Sandra Podall has passed all her ordination exams and has been accepted at Union Seminary in a PhD program in church history.

The Budget and Finance Committee reported that they hope to have the 2009 budget in final form at their August meeting and approved at the October meeting of Presbytery. They will be looking farther forward this year with their plans to look at committee needs for 2010 at their August meeting as well

The Rev. Andy Kennaly introduced himself as the new Program Director at Presbyterian Clearwater Forest. Andy is originally from Spokane, Washington, and attended college at Ashland College in Wisconsin. He began his duties at Presbyterian Clearwater Forest in January of this year.

The proposed amendment to the minute reading policy which was postponed to this meeting from the January meeting was considered. The Session Records Committee made no change to the language as presented in January. The proposal was amended and approved in this form: "Either the clerk of session or moderators of session are expected to present their record books annually. The moderators and clerks are urged to attend and fully participate in the procedures which will both train and explain the necessity for the various methods used in compiling information. The reading sessions will also be a forum for the exchange of ideas which can be helpful at the time and also be of value to Council and Presbytery. This is a bottom up activity for information. Whether or not a specific church's clerk or moderator is present to participate in these readings, the church is expected to present their records for review."

The next meeting of Presbytery will be held at the First Presbyterian Church, at Moorhead, Minnesota, on October 3rd and 4th. 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. Hope to see you there!

PRAYERS FOR THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

By: John G. Gibbs, SCE for PNP



A major emphasis in Presbyterian and Reformed worship remains prayer for the present day that is offered in light of scripture.

Scripture guides us “to ever-new intercessory concerns,” and one of these concerns is the creation and its creatures. “Piety, as the proper attitude toward God, is also a disposition toward creation as the work of God...” [Donald K. McKim, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Reformed Faith* (WJK Press, 1992), p. 284; John H. Leith, ed., *The Christian Life* (Harper & Row, 1984), p. ix]

Here are some prayers that meditate on scriptural texts in their testimony to this time of unprecedented ecological crisis. It would be well to read the texts first in each case, and then the prayer. Better yet, explore what prayer emerges for you from interactions between ancient text and present ecological challenges.

[Job 12:10; 2 Cor. 1:19-20; Gen. 1] We come to you, Creator God, in whose hand “is the life of every living thing, and the breath of every human being.” We rejoice that your affirmation of your creation is clear and unambiguous – not “Yes and No,” but “always Yes” in your Son Jesus Christ.

Enable us to “image” your loving care that made the creation “good.” Help us to become faithful restorers of that original goodness. We pray for the sake of him through whom all things were made.

[Hebrews 11:1] God of all being, who is both throned afar and nearer than hands or feet, grant to us “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” By that assurance help us to press forward toward renewal of ruined lands and lakes, and toward restoration of polluted atmospheres and oceans. By that conviction help us to move day after day, and decade after decade, beyond the desperations of global warming, and toward a planetary peace that shall reclaim the health and wholeness you gave this world at its start. We pray in the name of the One who brought to us and to this world “peace that passes understanding.”

[Phil. 2:1-11; Hebrews 11:3] God the Parent of us all, we are astonished that “the form of God” became in due time “the form of a slave,” which is to say “a human form.” You caught our attention with that kaleidoscope of moving images that puts God at home with a slave, and elevates the essence of our humanity into the glorious presence of God.

Now as the mind of Christ ever again takes us by surprise, help us “look to the interests of others,” including other creatures and the whole creation that need our “compassion and sympathy,” also our “love” and “humility.” May the mind of Christ guide us in pilgrimage during our immersion in the here and now, among trees and birds, along shore’s edge or on a vast mid-continent prairie. We pray in the effort to “understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.”

[Psalm 104] Let us sing praise to God the Creator, “clothed with honor and majesty, wrapped in light as with a garment.” “In, with, and for” our fellow creatures, we “look to you to give them [and us] food in due season.” May none of our votes, none of our thoughts, none of our actions obstruct your care for creation, add to drought, or increase starvation.

We give thanks that: “You cause the grass to grow for the cattle, /and plants for people to use, /to bring forth food from the earth, /and wine to gladden the human heart, /oil to make the face shine, /and bread to strengthen the human heart.” Hear our prayers, all-gracious God, in the name of Jesus Christ, who prays with us and for us.

[Psalm 8; Col. 1:17] God of wisdom, lead us away from confusion between our words about you, and your Word to us. When “mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,” and we search for the one “Centre” that holds firm, keep us open to the Reality that exists far beyond our thoughts about reality. When we search for order and “dominion,” authority and sovereignty, help us quest for “your glory above the heavens,” a glory “manifest in the night sky and in the songs of children.”

Help us acknowledge (in both word and deed) your sovereignty over the cosmic totality, so that we may be made fit to serve your benevolent and peaceful rule within creation. Help us also to know and feel the value you have placed upon us as servants of your creative purpose, for you are “mindful” of us and you “care for” us. We pray in the name of the One in whom “all things hold together.” [See W. B. Yeats, “Slouching Toward Bethlehem”; The New Oxford Annotated NRSV, note on Ps. 8:1-4]

In the journal *Nature*, and at the website www.nasa.gov, there is a new NASA report about human causes of global warming. Both scripture and theology contain prayers that speak to, and intercede for, the ever-changing real world around (and in) them. The full website for that NASA report about human impacts on a wide range of earth systems is:

http://www.nasa.gov/home/hqnews/2008/may/HQ_08127_Nature_Paper.html

Make sure to check out the Presbytery's website at www.northernplainspresbytery.com

Dear Presbytery clergy (of all stripes!),

This is a brief letter to let you all know of the Clergy Renewal Fund that our presbytery has available to help with on-going training and spiritual growth and development. The monies in this account are invested and the interest, now about \$3200, is available to help with 'renewal' activities.

The purpose of the fund, defined by the Presbytery in 1993, is:

- a) Retreats for clergy (this includes CLP's) and spouses
 - b) clergy convocations
 - c) clergy scholarships for continuing education and sabbaticals
 - d) other emerging needs for clergy renewal
- The Committee on Ministry has the responsibility for developing processes and applications for use of the funds, and for granting approval for requests made to the fund.

So, COM is encouraging you to apply for this money if there is some renewal activity you want to participate in. To apply, please send a letter to COM with the following information:

- What is the activity you wish to participate in?
- What is the total cost of the activity?
- What funding do you have to help with the activity (continuing education etc)?
- How much are you asking for from the Clergy Renewal Fund?

Please be as specific as possible and please give COM at least a month to review the requests. You may send your letter (email is fine) to Laurie at the presbytery office.

Let's use these funds to further our professional education and spiritual growth!

Peace,

Dan Wolpert for the Committee on Ministry

THE MODERATORS IS COMING



The Rev. Joan S. Gray, moderator of the 217th General Assembly, will be visiting the Presbytery of the Northern Plains June 4-6, 2008.

First Presbyterian Church of Grand Forks will be hosting a banquet in her honor on Thursday, June 5 2008. The

dinner will be served at 6:30 pm with a presentation from the Moderator starting 7:30 pm. A free-will offering will be taken for the meal with any extra funds going to support a mission of the Moderator's choice. **Space is limited for the dinner, please RSVP for the banquet directly to the church at 701-775-5545 or firstpres@firstpresgf.org.** No reservations required for the presentation. Those coming for the presentation only will be seated beginning at 7:15 pm.

STATED CLERK ANNOUNCES NEWSLETTER

Michael Lochow, Stated Clerk of the Presbytery, has announced he will begin the publication of a newsletter directed to the clerks of session. He expects the newsletter will cover topics such as session responsibility, maintenance of minute and register books, Book of Order and Robert's Rules questions, and current events. The first edition is expected to be distributed on or about June 10th.

RESOURCES

The Apostles' Creed for Today (Book)

This latest volume in the popular For Today series, written by the highly respected theologian and author Justo González, explains the familiar Apostles' Creed in easy, accessible language. González explores not only what the Creed meant in the early centuries but also its ongoing importance and relevance for Christian faith and practice today.

God's Problem: How the Bible Fails to Answer Our Most Important Question -- Why We Suffer (Book)

By: Ehrman, Bart D.

In times of questioning and despair, people often quote the Bible to provide answers. Surprisingly, though, the Bible does not have one answer but many 'answers' that often contradict one another. In *God's Problem*, Bart Ehrman discusses his personal anguish upon discovering the Bible's contradictory explanations for suffering and invites all people of faith — or no faith — to confront their deepest questions about how God engages the world and each of us.

Called to Be Church: The Book of Acts for a New Day (Book)

By: Anthony B. Robinson and Robert W. Wall

What makes the authentic markers of the church? The biblical book of Acts not only insistently raises this question but also provides resources to help congregations answer it. In 'Called to be Church,' biblical scholar Rob Wall and pastoral leader Tony Robinson join together to make Acts available as a source of renewal and transformation for the Christian church today. Used at SPRC training meetings.

Beginnings an Introduction to Christian Faith (DVD)

By: Andy Langford and Mark Ralls

Beginnings will give congregations the tools they need to create a welcoming place for both people interested in a life of faith and people engaged in a life of faith. They can bring questions, gain knowledge, and form or deepen their relationship with Jesus. There are 12 sessions which include such topics about Sin and the Cross; Death and the Resurrection; Providence and Suffering; Forgiveness and Wholeness; Prayer and more. This is also in VHS form. (Clear case) Length: 12 x 20 min. Leader's Guide.

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.

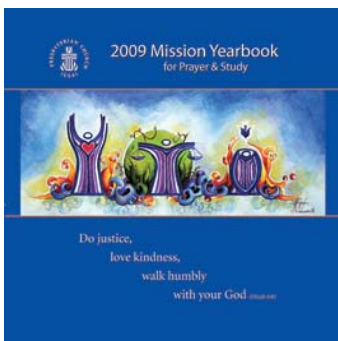
SUMMER OFFICE HOURS

The Presbytery office will normal summer hours are Monday thru Thursday 9:00 am to 4:30 pm from Memorial Day weekend until Labor Day weekend. Due to flexible schedules and reduced staffing during the summer, please call before stopping by to make sure someone will be at the office.

Starting June 23 until August 25, Laurie Elhard, Communication Coordinator for the Presbytery will be on family leave from the office. During this time, Bobbie Shields from First Presbyterian Church-Grand Forks, will be answering the Presbytery phones and forwarding them to the proper individuals within the Presbytery. Other staff members will cover where possible. However, some of the work Laurie does will be suspended during her leave. No staff members will be at the physical office during this time. However, all mail correspondence should still be mailed to 5555 South Washington Street, Grand Forks, ND 58201.

Also, because of General Assembly, vacation, and Synod School, Executive Presbyter Chuck Traylor's *Chat With Chuck* column will be on hiatus for the summer. It will resume in September.

LET THE PRESBYTERY SAVE YOU MONEY!



Let the Presbytery save you money by placing your 2009 Mission Yearbook order with us. You can order the 2009 Mission Yearbook and 2009 Children's Mission Yearbook for a discounted price.

The Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study inspires thousands of Presbyterians daily as they uphold the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in intercessory prayer. This everyday practice helps encourage new

relationships and enhance those already established between presbyteries and partners overseas. Synod and presbytery maps and mission-partner maps show mission locations around the world. Demographic profiles help readers learn about particular countries where the church has mission partnerships. Those who are interested can follow the suggested daily order of worship for use especially with the Yearbook.

We request that you pay with your order; we will charge postage (minimum of \$3.00) if you do not send a check with your order. Thanks!

Please fill out the following form and return to the Presbytery office by August 1, 2008.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Church: _____

Number of Mission Yearbooks _____ X \$ 4.50 = _____

Number of Children's Yearbooks _____ X \$ 6.00 = _____

Mail orders to: **Presbytery of the Northern Plains**

5555 South Washington Drive Suite A

Grand Forks, North Dakota 58201

Presbytery's Calendar

June 1	First Presbyterian Church of Hamilton 125 th Ann
June 5	Banquet for the GA Moderator
June 9	Nominating Mt at VCS
June 10	Personnel Mt by CC
June 17	Budget and Finance Mt in West Fargo
June 17	Staff Meeting in West Fargo
June 21	General Assembly convenes
June 22	Baker-Downer Westminster Presbyterian Church 125 th Ann
June 28	General Assembly ends
June 29	First Presbyterian Church of LaMoure 125 th Ann
July 4	Holiday – Office closed
July 6	Westminster Presbyterian Church of Devils Lake 125 th Ann
July 15	COM meeting by VCS
July 27	Knox Presbyterian Church of Minto 125 th Ann
July 29	Kenya Mission Trip leaves
Aug 3	Presbyterian Church of Bathgate 125 th Ann
Aug 5	Budget and Finance Mt at VCS
Aug 14	Council Mtg
Aug 15	Kenya Mission Trip returns

CC = Conference Call

VCS = Video Conferencing Sites

Presbytery office information:

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

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A copy deadline for the *Light* is the twenty fifth of the month. Item maybe sent to:

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