

# Light of the Northern Plains

Presbytery of the Northern Plains

June 2009

## PRAYER CONCERNS

Dr. John Brahm "Jack" Watkins (83), Elder at First Presbyterian Church of Minot, passed away on Sunday, May 31, 2009 in a Minot Healthcare center. Jack's loving family includes his wife of 58 years: Fern. The family is asking that memorials be sent to either First Presbyterian Church or to the Roosevelt Park Zoo. Please keep Fern and the entire Watkin family in your prayers during this time.

Jeanne Otterness Hochhalter (43), daughter of Phyllis Otterness, Clerk of Session of Tower City Presbyterian Church, died Saturday May 30 2009 in the Palliative Care Unit of MeritCare Hospital. Please keep the Otterness and Hochhalter families in your prayers during this time.

James Baird (64), an elder and Treasurer of the Langdon Presbyterian Church, passed away on May 22, 2009 from prostate cancer. Please keep the Baird family in your prayers during this time.

Chris Bohn, an elder in the Grandin church, lost his battle with acute myeloid leukemia on May 7. Please remember in your prayers his wife Jody, children Megan, Zach and Molly, mother Betty, brother Rick, and the whole Northern Cass community.

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

Please keep everyone in your prayers who is still dealing with flooding or recovery in our Presbytery.

## GREETINGS FROM THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE PRESBYTER



Dear Members and Friends of Northern Plains Presbytery,

It is a real honor to greet you as your new Interim Executive Presbyter. I am excited to be on the job and looking forward to the opportunity to get to know more of you and to work together on the interim tasks before us.

Whenever St. Paul wrote to one of his churches, he would invariably remind them that they could find both their joy and their unity in the grace and peace extended to them

by God through Jesus Christ. It is a reminder that needs to be front and center in the life of our presbytery as we begin this new chapter together. While our differences are real and need to be voiced and heard, what we hold in common is a commitment to a Lord who graces us daily with everything we need to live faithfully and at peace with one another. For reasons I do not completely understand, there has been a mantra of sorts in my mind during this time of transition, both for me and for you. "God is in everything" has been running continually in my head and heart; I believe it and ask you to do the same.

As I reflect upon what I would most like to say to you in this, my first contribution to our newsletter, it strikes me that there might be three questions you'd like to put to me and that it could be helpful if I tried to make a brief reply to each of them:

1. What do you see as the main "interim tasks" before the Presbytery?
2. How do you expect to go about helping us to address them?
3. How can we best help you to do this?

As to the interim tasks we face, I am pleased to say that we had a good discussion at the Council meeting yesterday (June 4) and it helped me to be clearer about the challenges ahead. As you know, we are seeking to live into a vision of ourselves as "a vibrant, informed Presbyterian community which nourishes ministry and joins in Christ's mission." What became clearer to me with the help of the Council was that there are a cluster of questions we need to address if we are going to be able to do this. I want to emphasize four of them:

1. How are we being led to claim and strengthen our Presbyterian identity here on the Great Plains?
2. How can we do a better job of nurturing leaders and strengthening their capacity to lead the Presbytery in mission and ministry?

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3. What is the best way to organize and coordinate our various ministries so as to make them most effective?
4. Given the real limits to our resources, what model of presbytery staffing can we adopt to move us forward in serving Christ's mission in this place?

As to how I might help the presbytery in addressing these concerns, I want to stress three strategies that are important to me and, I hope, will be useful to you. First, we need to create a climate of trust in the presbytery so that we can come together as members of the same body who understand and accept our need for one another. Second, we need to have honest conversations that give voice to both our hopes and fears about the future. And, finally, we need to wait together for those moments when the Spirit opens our hearts and shows us the ways we need to go. *Without such guidance, we will fizzle and fade; with it, we move ahead with boldness.*

So what can you do? Clearly, we need as many of you as possible to be fully engaged in this time of discernment and decision. Pray for your Presbytery, both in your personal devotions and in your public worship. Talk with one another about the questions we are facing. And, when you are invited to special meetings to discuss these issues with others from around the presbytery, make every effort to prepare, to present yourself and to make your contribution.

“A vibrant, informed Presbyterian community” is built from vibrant and informed Presbyterians. I urge you to be one and to join us in building up our presbytery, to the glory of God.

Yours in Christ,  
Steve Minnema

## CONTACT INFO & SUMMER HOURS

The Presbytery office will now house the Rev. Dr. Steve Minnema, Interim Executive Presbyter and Laurie Elhard, Communications Coordinator as of June 1, 2009. The other staff members, (Elder Michael Lochow, Stated Clerk, and Elder Bill Cawley, Treasurer) will operate from “virtual” offices, i.e., wherever their telephone and computer happen to be.

Once again, here is the office contact information:

Address: 5555 South Washington Suite A  
Grand Forks, ND 58201

Phone #: 701-772-0783  
or 800-243-3532 (Toll Free)

Fax #: 701-775-7599

### Staff contact information:

Steve Minnema, Interim Executive Presbyter  
701-213-6712 Cell

[exec.presbyter@gmail.com](mailto:exec.presbyter@gmail.com)

Michael Lochow, Stated Clerk

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Bill Cawley, Treasurer

[bcawley@cawleycpa.com](mailto:bcawley@cawleycpa.com)

Laurie Elhard, Communication Coordinator

[pnpooffice@gmail.com](mailto:pnpooffice@gmail.com)

The Presbytery summer office hours will take effect on the week after Memorial Day. The office will normally be open 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.

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

By: Don Hariman, Chair of Nominating Committee

The committee on Nominations will be commencing its meetings and search process for candidates who feel a call and a willingness to serve the church through the presbytery by accepting nomination as Alternate Commissioner to General Assembly for the GA session of 2010.

We will be searching for candidates both clergy and elders for these positions. **We call your attention to the Manual of Operations of the presbytery; particularly section P-6.0104 Section III c which details the criteria for nominating elders and clergy to these positions. Nominations may be received from church Sessions, from individuals or the candidate may self-nominate. A written statement of the sense of call to service is necessary for consideration.**

In addition we will need to nominate a Youth Advisory Delegate (YAD) to GA and Synod and we would appreciate the response of the presbytery regarding eligible individuals who would engage this opportunity for service and education within the church.

Please send all nominations to the Nominating Committee at the Presbytery office during the month of June. You may also contact members of the committee.

Members of the Nominations Committee are: D. G. Hariman, Grand Forks; John Werth, Cavalier; Matthew Stith, West Fargo; Sylvia Pringle, Jamestown; JoAnn Zutz, Red Lake Falls; Edie Wagar, Towner; Mindy Meier, New Rockford; Marilyn Olson, Fargo.

## MORE GRANTS GIVEN AWAY



By: *Gretchen Graf, Chair of Budget & Finance*

Council was pleased to approve six new requests for mission grants at its meeting in early June. These grants will fund a variety of mission projects proposed by churches and presbytery teams.

Youth from Rolla will receive funds to help with their mission trip to Kansas City in July. The Fargo church will explore a new mission relationship with San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, beginning with a mission trip in November. Presbyterians and Methodists in Jamestown will encourage community involvement in their churches at a street fair in August, and we'll provide support for this event.

Two presbytery teams asked us to support educational events. We'll become a sponsor for the International Climate Stewardship Solutions workshop in Bismarck in June, a project of the Prairie Climate Stewardship Network. The Rev. Darrel Cory will attend a conference themed "Making a Difference" and share his learning with the presbytery when he returns. In addition, we've agreed to purchase an automated external defibrillator for Clearwater Forest. As the camp attracts an aging population for retreats and workshops, a defibrillator is a precaution which may save a life.

Some funds remain in the mission grant budget for 2009. Any church or presbytery team may request funds by sending a brief description of the mission project to the presbytery council and including a budget showing the need the grant will meet. Please address requests to the presbytery office.

## 2010 PER CAPITA SET

2010 Per Capita will remain the same as 2009. The delegates at the April Presbytery decided to support the recommendation of the Budget and Finance Committee and not increase it. A similar decision was made at the Synod's spring meeting. According to the Synod office, this will be the first time since 1999 that there has been no year-over-year increase in per capita.

The per capita apportionment is based on the funds necessary for the Presbytery/Synod/General Assembly to do its essential ecclesiastical work. It has been said that per capita apportionment is like a utility bill. Just as we pay heat, light, water and telephone in order to remain connected to the utility system and benefit from the services provided, we also pay per capita so that the Presbyterian system can function on behalf of all of us.

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).

For more information about per capita apportionment, go to: [www.pcusa.org/percapita/](http://www.pcusa.org/percapita/).

## RESOURCES

### **Healing Liturgies for the Seasons of Life** (Book)

Publisher: Westminster John Knox Press  
This book is a rich resource, both as a tool for worship and also devotionally as you face the deepest questions of life. Here you will find one way that the church can renew and rediscover its healing ministry. This distinctive resource features specific healing liturgies for injury, illness, death, separation, retirement, and a host of other major life events, from a wide variety of religious traditions.

### **Transforming Rituals: Daily Practices for Changing Lives** (Book)

Publisher: The Alban Institute  
Oswald explores the use of rituals as spiritually healing practices for the home, congregation, and broader community. He teaches congregational leaders how individuals and groups can use familiar rituals to name, evaluate, live out, celebrate, and grow through change.

### **The Disciple's Joy: Six Practices for Spiritual Growth** (Book)

By: Foss, Michael W.  
Focusing on the powerful theme of discipleship, *The Disciple's Joy* explores the joy of faith, helping readers discover joy in the midst of struggle. Foss explores the benefits of practicing discipleship and shows, through recent research, how a practicing faith provides meaning, belonging, and joy. Intended for both personal reflection and small group study, *The Disciple's Joy* builds on the six time-tested marks of discipleship and introduces six practices for spiritual growth. Includes questions for reflection and discussion.

To borrow a resource, contact the **Resource Center for Churches** at [info@resourcesforthejourney.org](mailto: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/>

## DC/LA TRIP TO WASHINGTON DC

July 7 – 15, 2009

All 9-12 grade youth are invited to join us for a trip to Washington DC for the DC/LA Conference sponsored by Youth Specialties (<http://dcla2009.com/>). The DC/LA Conference is a national youth event that is held every three years in LA and Washington DC. Sponsored by Youth Specialties, it is designed to equip high school youth with tools to deepen their faith and communicate that faith to others. The five day conference will include large group sessions, with about 15,000 youth in attendance, and break out small group sessions. Several big named Christian bands and solo artists will be performing.

The cost will be approximately \$400 and will include transportation, lodging, and program expenses. A charter bus will be leaving Jamestown on July 7 and will return on the 15th. Scholarship funds are available through the Youth Connection Council. Space is limited, so please contact Elizabeth Sherfy at the United Presbyterian Church of Jamestown at 701-252-1748 or [esherfy@daktel.com](mailto:esherfy@daktel.com) as soon as possible.

## PRESBYTERY MISSION TRIP

JUNE 22 – 27

All 9<sup>th</sup> graders through adults are invited to join our Presbytery Mission Trip to Clearwater Forest and inner city Minneapolis this summer. We will be doing some work at Clearwater Forest (ie, trail clearing and painting) for about four days and then will spend several days in Minneapolis working with two inner-city mission groups.

The cost for the trip will be \$50 per person and will include transportation, room and board. To register for this trip please contact Elizabeth Sherfy at the United Presbyterian Church of Jamestown at 701-252-1748 or [esherfy@daktel.com](mailto:esherfy@daktel.com).

## New Orleans Mission Trip

October 3 – 10, 2009

*It's Not about Raising Walls,  
it's about Raising Hope*

Make a difference in the life of someone who is still without a home four years after Katrina. Join with First Presbyterian Church, Bismarck, as we go back to New Orleans to help rebuild homes. No construction experience necessary, just a willingness to learn.

The cost of the trip is \$625 per person which includes: plane ticket, transportation in New Orleans, housing, and most meals. (Each person is responsible for meals while traveling and sightseeing in New Orleans.) Housing in New Orleans is in an air conditioned church that has been converted to host work groups.

We leave Bismarck, Saturday, October 3. There will be an opportunity to tour flood damaged and rebuilt areas in New Orleans Sunday afternoon. We work Monday through Friday and return Saturday, October 10.

If you would like to participate in the mission trip, please contact Vicki Rucker at 701-223-6091

## Presbytery's Calendar

June 4	Council Mtg Special Presbytery Mtg
June 22	Nominating CC
June 22-27	Youth Mission Trip
July 6	Office Closed
July 7-15	Mission Trip to Washington DC – Youth & Adult
July 14	Committee on Ministry CC
July 20	John Calvin's 500 <sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration at Community Presbytery Church of WF
Aug 27	Council Mtg
Sept 7	Labor Day – Office Closed
Sept 27-29	Synod Meeting
Oct 2-3	Fall Presbytery Meeting at First Presbyterian Church of Bismarck
Oct 17	Transformation Team Event with Doug Pagitt at First Presbyterian Church of Grand Forks
Nov 19	Council Mtg at VCS

CC = Conference Call  
VCS = Video Conferencing Sites

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PNP vision statement:

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

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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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