

Light of the Northern Plains

Presbytery of the Northern Plains

June 2011

PRAYER CONCERNS/JOYS

We pray for the residents of **North Minneapolis** as they recover from the tornado that struck on May 22. We also pray for the congregation of **Kwanzaa Community Presbyterian** in North Minneapolis. Many of its members' homes were damaged and both buildings sustained roof and water damage.

Regions throughout the United States continue to be buffeted by a series of storms, tornadoes, floods and wildfires that have caused loss of life and severe damage to homes and property. Please pray that people affected by these events know God is with them.

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

The people of Japan, the volunteers and advisors and countries who are sending aid following the devastating earthquake, tsunami and radiation concerns.

Please hold our Chogoria partners in your prayers.

“HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION . . .”

By: Elder Lorelee Rude, CLP and Moderator of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains

But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. – Isaiah 43:1-3

“Dark night of the soul” was the phrase sixteenth-century theologian St. John of the Cross used to describe the extreme sense of desolation and depression that some Christians experience during their faith journey. Many years ago, when I went through a similar experience, God spoke to me very powerfully through the familiar hymn “How Firm a Foundation,” which is partially based on this passage of Isaiah:

When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
the rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
for I will be near thee, thy troubles to bless,
and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

This text and this hymn came to mind as I listened to reports of the rising waters many people in our presbytery are fighting right now. They reminded me of three important lessons that I believe can offer hope in any kind of trouble.

First, God has told us everything we need to know in Scripture. “How firm a foundation...is laid for your faith in his excellent word,” the hymn puts it. Often when people face monumental tasks or overwhelming loss, they tend to feel that God has disappeared. When our hearts can't feel God's presence, the truth of God's word is the rock to which we cling.

Second, when we trust God, the trials we face can make us better, not bitter. The fire will not consume us; it will only burn away the impurities in our hearts that distract us from our relationship with God. If we submit to that process instead of railing against it, we can find strength to walk through the flames rather than running from them.

And finally, God will never abandon us. Regardless of what our emotions tell us, scripture tells us we belong to God, who has redeemed us and is able to transform our circumstances with redemptive power. “The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose I will not, *I will not* desert to its foes.” We might feel that we are desperately hanging onto God, or even losing our grip, but the reality is that God is holding us securely and will never let us go.

FLOOD TASK FORCE UPDATE

By: the Rev. Gretchen Graf, Chair of Flood Response Task Force

The Flood Task Force hoped that we had passed the flooding for this year, except for the ongoing needs in Devils Lake which will be a major focus for us later this summer. However, recent rains have brought unprecedented floods to western North Dakota. The task force encourages everyone to pray for the communities affected along the Missouri River valley. We will stand by to coordinate assistance from across the presbytery if needed, and to access resources from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance as we can. Please call task force chair Gretchen Graf after hours (218.791.8687) to update the needs of your congregation as flooding continues.



CALL FOR THE JUNE PRESBYTERY MEETING

By: Elder Lorelee Rude, Moderator of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains



The one-hundred-second stated meeting of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains will take place on Monday, June 20, 2011, beginning at 10 a.m. **Due to flooding in the Mandan area, the location of the meeting has been changed to Westminster Presbyterian Church in Casselton, North Dakota.**

The morning's agenda will include a report from the personnel committee of council regarding the position of Transitional Executive Presbyter. The Committee on Ministry will be presenting Brenna Nickel for ordination examination. We will also have the joy of recognizing milestone ordination anniversaries of our presbytery's clergy members.

During the lunch break, Stated Clerk Michael Lochow will be leading a question-and-answer discussion with any clerks who would like to participate. This is an important opportunity for clerks to learn how the likely passage of the new Form of Government will affect their responsibilities, as well as to ask any other procedural questions.

The bulk of the afternoon will be devoted to a presentation by Presbyterians for Earthcare, one of the ministry teams of the presbytery. They will offer us ideas for greener living and challenge us to be more conscientious about our stewardship of creation.

During the closing worship we will receive an offering to benefit the Bdecan Food Pantry, which serves the Spirit Lake Reservation in Dakota Presbytery. We will also be collecting items for the Bdecan Food Pantry at this meeting. Peanut butter and jelly, soap, detergent, baby items and hygiene products are most needed. The Bdecan Ministry Team is the newest ministry team of our presbytery and has been hard at work with members of the tribal government and the Bdecan Presbyterian Church to draft a mission statement and lay out a strategy for ministry. Please invite your congregations to support this exciting new mission venture with their contributions, monetary or otherwise, for the Food Pantry and bring them along to the meeting.

Presbytery meeting materials will be posted and available on the Presbytery website at www.northernplainspresbytery.com by noon on Wednesday, June 8, 2011, for congregations/individuals to download. For congregations that do not 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 a.m. on June 15, 2011, to ensure you receive the packet in time.

Child Care will be provided for preschool children of minister members or elder commissioners at no cost to users. Attendees who need child care must contact the Presbytery office no later than June 14, 2011, if they wish to use this service.

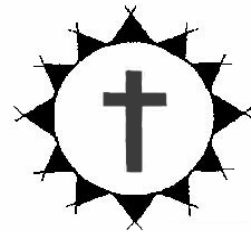
If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the Presbytery office at 701-772-0783 or toll free at 1-800-243-3532, or by email at pnppoffice@gmail.com.

PRESBYTERY TO HOLD FOOD DRIVE FOR BDECAN FOOD BANK

The Presbytery of the Northern Plains will be collecting items for the Bdecan Food Bank at the next Presbytery Meeting on Monday, June 20, 2011 at Westminster Presbyterian Church of Casselton. Bdecan food pantry's source of income to buy food through Great Plains Food Bank has been greatly reduced. The food bank is housed in the Bdecan Presbyterian Church in Tokio, ND. The Bdecan Food Bank not only distributes to members of the church but anyone on the Spirit Lake Nation regardless of income. Below is a list of items that are most in need.

FOOD PANTRY NEEDS LISTS

- Everything for babies and young children
- Diapers of all sizes (including Depends)
- Baby wipes
- Toilet paper
- Feminine Products
- Nursing Pads
- Peanut Butter
- Jelly
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Shampoo
- Bar Soap
- Laundry Detergent (Liquid or Powder)
(If powder laundry detergent is provided, it can be packaged in a per-wash size and distributed more effectively)



The offering at the Presbytery meeting will also go toward the food pantry needs. If you would like to make a donation, please send items along with your congregation's delegate to the meeting, or financial donations may be sent to the Presbytery office. For more information, please contact the Presbytery office at 701-772-0783 or email pnppoffice@gmail.com.

PNP COUNCIL TO MEET MONTHLY



By: Elder Cheryl Biller, Chair of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains Council

Your council is planning to meet monthly, either face to face or through the use of cool web-based meeting tools, for the next several months. We have much to do to keep on track with our transition. We are beginning the

search for a transitional executive staff person to help us stay on top of our transition process and help staff the huge amount of work for which the Committee on Ministry is responsible. This will be a half-time position and we are searching on a regional level.

Jointly with the transition task force, we have amassed a good-sized folder of all the work products generated in various presbytery, session, and council meetings toward the goal of reshaping the presbytery to better meet our changing needs. At our next meeting (again jointly with the transition task force), we are focusing energy on identifying the really critical pieces of work most needed to encourage, empower, and equip our congregations to do vital ministry.

We will keep reporting back to you as we take steps forward on this journey, and you are always welcome to call or email any of the council with your questions, ideas, or concerns. We appreciate your prayers and support as we work through this process.

On a personal note, as well, I would ask you to continue to lift up Pastor Bob Edwards and the Minot congregation, Pastors Jake Kincaid and Vicki Rucker and the Bismarck congregation, Pastor Deanna Reikow and the Mandan congregation, and Pastor Kevin Kaufmann and the Lake Region Parish (Devil's Lake, Minnewauken, Webster, and Bdecan). Rising flood waters are making life challenging at best and really difficult and dangerous in some cases.

PRAYER CONCERNS/JOYS

If you or someone from your congregations would like a prayer concern/joy to be sent out to the Presbytery, please contact the office at pnpooffice@gmail.com or call 701-772-0783. If the request is on behalf of someone else, please make sure to check with them before requesting.



SUMMER OFFICE HOURS

The Presbytery summer office hours will be Monday thru Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 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.

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

Additional staff contact information:

Michael Lochow, Stated Clerk: sc.pbynyp@gmail.com
or 701-271-4775 (home)

Bill Cawley, Treasurer: bcawley@cawleycpa.com
or 701-352-2020 (office)

Laurie Elhard, Communication Coordinator
pnpooffice@gmail.com or 701-388-9090 (cell)

RESOURCES

The **Resource Center for Churches** will be closed from June 30th through August 2 for their traditional summer break.

DreamThinkBeDo: Dream (DVD)

Looking for a springboard to get young adults talking about what Christianity is all about for this generation? DreamThinkBeDo is an engaging new catalyst for conversation among young adults searching for what's next for followers of Jesus. Starting with the foundation of "Love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind" (Luke 10.27), DTBD is what Christian educators have been looking for to help college groups and twenty- to thirty-somethings build a 21st Century faith.

Jesus in the Gospels (DVD)

By: Various, Nellie Moser, Leander Keck
Jesus in the Gospels focuses on the portraits of Jesus found in the four Gospels-- Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The word 'in' used in the title signals that this study takes an approach different from the familiar "life and teaching of Jesus" approach of reading stories and accounts of what Jesus said and did in order to draw conclusions about their meaning and about who Jesus was. This study looks at the way each Gospel writer presents events and teachings and at the picture of Jesus that emerges in each of the Gospels.

Reason for God, The (DVD)

By: Keller, Timothy
Captured live and unscripted, pastor and author Timothy Keller meets with a group of people over six sessions to address their doubts and objections to Christianity. Using literature, philosophy, real-life experiences, and the Bible, Keller and the group explore the truth of Christianity

To borrow this or a different resource, contact the **Resource Center for Churches** at (888) 293-9901 (toll free) or info@resourcesforthejourney.org.

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/>

UPDATES FROM COM

By: Elder Dale Shook, Chair of the Committee on Ministry

The Committee on Ministry (COM) continues its goal of completing triennial visits to congregations, with 16 enjoyable visits having occurred in 2010 and so far in 2011. Triennial reports were recently reviewed for Glencoe and Walhalla.

COM is in the process of reviewing and updating the pulpit supply list. If you would like to be added to that list, please contact COM.

As per presbytery policy, COM receives documents entitled "Local Commission Between A Session and A Commissioned Lay Pastor." If you are a CLP, please see Appendix A of that policy, complete the form, and forward it to COM to help us complete our responsibilities to presbytery.

Brenna Lea Nickel, graduated from seminary in May, will be examined for ordination by presbytery, June 20, in Casselton. Brenna is being called to the international parish that includes Portal, ND. Further information will be in the presbytery meeting packet.

COM requested the Moderator of Presbytery to appoint Rev. Darrel Cory as temporary moderator of session in Watford City, ND.

Tri-County has called an ELCA as associate pastor to join Rev. Jessica Merchant in ministry; final paperwork is being completed. Pastor Nominating Committees continue their work in Moorhead, Jamestown, Hallock, and Watford City.

In May, topics of information and discussion for COM included separation ethics for pastors and congregations, elders serving communion, recent votes on amendments from General Assembly, and COM resource groups.

As always, COM is thankful for any input or requests from individuals or congregations. If there are ways we can serve as resources or support, please let us know.

LET THE PRESBYTERY SAVE YOU MONEY!

Let the Presbytery save you money by placing your 2012 Mission Yearbook order with us 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 enhances 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.

We request that you pay with your order; we will charge postage if you do not send a check with your order. Please fill out the following form and return to the Presbytery office by August 15, 2011.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Church: _____

Number of Mission Yearbooks _____ X \$ 11.50 = _____

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

5555 South Washington Drive Suite A

Grand Forks, North Dakota 58201

Presbytery's Calendar

June 10	Council Mtg by GTM
June 14	Committee on Ministry CC
June 20	Summer Presbytery Meeting at Westminster Presbyterian Church of Casselton
July 4	Independence Day – office closed
July 12	Committee on Ministry CC
July 12	Council Mtg by GTM
Aug 9	Committee on Ministry at Westminster Presbyterian Church of Devils Lake
Aug 11	Council Mtg at United Presbyterian Church of Jamestown
Sept 5	Labor Day – office closed
Sept 6	Summer office hours end
Sept 24	Fall Presbytery Meeting at First Pres. Ch of Mandan
Dec 3	Winter Presbytery Meeting at all video conference sites

CC = Conference Call

GTM= GoToMeeting

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.

Contributors: Dale Shook, Cheryl Biller, Lorelee Rude, Gretchen Graf, Michael Lochow, and Laurie Elhard

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

Laurie Elhard

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