

Light of the Northern Plains

Presbytery of the Northern Plains

May 2010

PRAYER CONCERNS

Please hold our Chogoria partners in your prayers.

Donna Monteith, pastor at Faith United Parish (Grandin/Hunter), recently had sinus surgery. Please keep Donna in your prayers for fast healing.

Please continue to pray for all people in Haiti have who lost friends, families, homes, and the people who are providing aid in this critical time.

Myrna Mettler, Elder and Parish Nurse from Grandin, has been hospitalized again. Please pray that Myrna will have a rapid recovery.

SPECIAL MEETING INFORMATION

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



Dear Presbyters in the Northern Plains,

It is my privilege on behalf of presbytery council and its transition task force to urge your attendance at the special meeting of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains called for June 11-12, 2010 at Jamestown College.

(You may download a copy of the agenda at

www.northernplainspresbyter.com)

The meeting will begin on Friday, June 11, at 11am in the Heritage Room of the Nafus Center. There will be signs to direct you. You may register at 10:30am or over the lunch hour. The first item of business will be the presentation of Jessica Zolondek to be examined for ordination. Jessica has been declared "ready to receive a call" by the Greater Atlanta Presbytery and has received that call to be a chaplain at the Trinity Health Care Systems in Minot.

Following lunch, the themed portion of the meeting will begin as we seek to "Discover the <Creative> Spirit in our Midst." After opening prayers for the coming of the Spirit and a community building time, keynoter Sue Coller from Minnesota Valleys Presbytery will help us try to figure out how we can "teach old churches new tricks." Following that, in

our long range planning session, we will hear the results of discussions that have happened in our sessions and continue seeking to discern the priorities for our future to which God is leading us.

The evening meal will be a barbecue outdoors (with Vegetarian options) followed by a worship service in Vorhees Chapel. There will then be a social time before those who are spending the night retire to their rooms in Wilson Hall.

Following breakfast, morning prayers will lead us into two different rounds of workshops in which commissioners can exercise their creativity as they think with workshop leaders and others about new ideas for helping our congregations to strengthen their worship life, their ministry in the community, and their practice of team leadership. A late morning business session will focus on a number of transitional matters being brought to us by the Committee on Ministry. After lunch, a closing worship will send us on our way, ready for new beginnings.

Because of the preparations necessary to host us at the college, advance reservations are necessary for this meeting! Please call or e-mail Laurie at the Presbytery office before June 4. The total cost per person (which includes meals and a room for the night) is \$40.00, payable in advance or at registration.

This is a great meeting to invite people from your church who may not ordinarily come to Presbytery but who will benefit from the fellowship and learning we are expecting together. Mark your calendars, make your reservations and plan to join us for this special occasion.

PENTECOST OFFERING – SUNDAY MAY 23

Do you remember how it felt to be a child, a teenager or a young adult just starting out on your lifelong journey? Everything was fresh and new — a wonderful adventure! Songs of praise to God flow naturally from the lips of children. If only we could tap once more into that seemingly endless supply of vitality, faith and joy that young people possess.

Well, we can! We can spend time with children. We can mentor youth. We can support young adults in their endeavors. When we focus our time and attention on young people, we

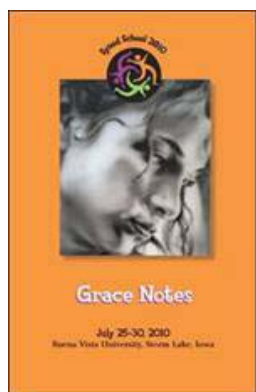


get everything we give back a hundred-fold. And their energy lights a corresponding flame within us. It is truly God's Spirit at work.

A meaningful way we can engage with children and youth is through our gifts to the Pentecost Offering:

- Forty percent of the Pentecost Offering is kept by each congregation to help children at risk in our own community. Think of the many creative ways we can make a difference right here at home. And if you can't think of the best way to use the money, just ask a young person!
- The Pentecost Offering supports a new generation of leadership for the church through the Young Adult Volunteer program. Over 25 percent of these young adults go on to serve as elders, mission workers, seminary professors, or pastors — the people who will shape our church in the future.
- Pentecost Offering funds were used to create www.365.org, an engaging online devotion written for youth. It is offered free of charge and is timely, theologically thoughtful and diverse. And it lives where young people live — online!

The Pentecost Offering offers us the opportunity to designate 40 percent of what we receive to help children at risk in our community. Through General Assembly ministries, the Pentecost Offering supports the faith journey of Presbyterian young people, develops a new generation of church leadership, and advocates on a national level for children at risk. None of these vital ministries would be possible without the Pentecost Offering. Keep the spirit flowing.



2010 SYNOD SCHOOL CATALOG, REGISTRATION MATERIALS ONLINE

"Synod School is a learning and personal enrichment experience for people of all ages," the 2010 Synod School catalog states in its opening line. Now, the 2010 Synod School catalog and registration material is available at: <http://www.lakesandprairies.org/>

The catalog includes course descriptions, convocation and worship leaders, fee schedule, housing information and much more. The theme for this year's Synod School is "Grace Notes."

If you would like to speak to someone about Synod School, please call the synod office at 651.357.1140 or 800.328.1880. You can also get your questions answered by sending an e-mail to Diana Barber, associate synod executive for leadership development, at dbarber@lakesandprairies.org.

500 VOICE CHOIR FOR OPENING GENERAL ASSEMBLY WORSHIP

More than a few good voices – that's what the Committee on Local Arrangements (COLA) is seeking for the 219th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in Minneapolis in July.

COLA is inviting singers to join what will be a 500-voice choir that will sing for the Assembly's opening worship service at 10 am Sunday, July 4, in the Minneapolis Convention Center. Paula Sanders, executive coordinator for COLA, said complete church choirs and individuals are welcome to join the large choir.

Jere Lantz, choir director at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis, will direct the large choir. Lantz holds a master's degree and doctorate in conducting from Yale University.

Additional details about rehearsals, registration and the music planned for the opening worship service can be found on the COLA website or by calling the COLA office at 612-871-2617.

HAITI RELIEF AND RECOVERY

As of April 12th, total gifts to [Presbyterian Disaster Assistance](#) (PDA) for Haiti Relief reached \$8.57 million. At the end of April, the Presbytery office has collected \$ 16,207.95 for Haiti relief efforts. The Presbytery's Council has been encouraging congregations and individuals to give financial support for relief to Haiti through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA).

Two new recovery initiatives by PDA relate to the opportunity to feed thousands of displaced Haitians by means of providing seeds and tools for 30,000 Haitian farmers. This work is being done in cooperation with the [Presbyterian Hunger Program's](#) existing partners in Haiti.

You may send PDA Offerings from your congregation to the Presbytery office, please clearly mark checks or transmittal forms for "PDA-Haiti" or DR000064.



ROWBOATS OR SAILBOATS?

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



I had a week of continuing education leave recently and one of my pleasures was reading a new book by former G.A. moderator Joan Grey about the role of elders as spiritual leaders in our congregations. Joan has agreed to come up to the Northern Plains in February of next year (could you ask for a better sign of her courage?)

and so I wanted to look this book over and see how it might guide us as we prepare to make the most of her time with us. (It is also a resource for us as we think about how we might strengthen our leadership teams in local churches.)

In one of her chapters, Joan suggests that we have to decide whether our churches are going to be rowboat churches or sailboat churches. In other words, to put it all too succinctly, are we going to try to move into the future depending on our own muscle or are we going to learn how to catch the power of the Spirit to move us forward? Given that Scripture frequently reminds us – for instance, in the story of the first Pentecost – that the Spirit’s power is able “to accomplish abundantly far more than we can ask or imagine” (Ephesians 3:20), sailboating seems like the best way to go.

Before we turn in our oars for good, we might want to think about this a little more deeply. Is our choice quite as stark as this? Must it be either oars or sails? Is it possible that the church’s ship is best propelled by some combination of the two? That’s a question that prompts me to several reflections.

First, we are rightly warned by authors and spiritual guides like Joan Grey against depending entirely upon our own efforts as we seek to live faithful lives in the church and in the community. Whenever we get anxious, jump in our rowboats and start rowing like everything depends on us, we are likely to meet some kind of disaster or another. (Why *was* Jesus asleep in that boat in the storm?)

Second, we are also rightly urged by wise folk to learn how to hoist our sails and let a power from beyond us fill and move us in ways we could never manage on our own. At the heart of such sail hoisting is nothing other than *basic trust*, a quality that’s in short supply these days. But we must remember that the Holy Spirit is often referred to as “the Promise of God” in order to alert us to the truth that it is in trust that we receive that promise. A lot of us could spend some very profitable time in prayer asking that a greater measure of trust be planted in our souls.

Finally, might it not be possible that the Spirit’s power is sometimes demonstrated by empowering us to row harder and longer, but with far less anxiety, than we could ever manage on our own? Something tells me that we need to stop thinking of the spiritual life as a more or less passive way to live! Maybe as leaders in the church we need to figure out how to catch the Spirit *and* put our muscles to the oars. Either one without the other could swamp the ship (and leave us stranded on “Survivor Island.”)

RESOURCES

History of the Bible in English (DVD)

Trace the history of the Bible you own from original texts to modern translations.

Missing Peace (DVD- 46 mins)

Missing Peace: Women of Faith and the Failure of War' looks at the widening polarization of religions today and how violence toward the other binds people around the world in deepening fear and grief. More specifically, it looks at how religion is being used as a justification for war. Six women (two Muslims, two Jews, and two Christians) present a bold strategy for achieving peace—personally, interpersonally, and globally. Divided into two 23 minute segments.

Theologians Under Hitler (DVD - 64 mins)

In the days after World War II, a convenient story was told of church leaders and ordinary Christians that defied the Nazis from the beginning. Recent research has uncovered a very different story. Rather than resisting, the greater part of the German church saw Hitler’s rise in 1933 as an act of God’s blessing, a new chapter in the story of God among the German people. This film, based upon groundbreaking research, introduces the viewer to three of the greatest Christian scholars of the twentieth century: Paul Althaus, Emanuel Hirsch, and Gerhard Kittel, men who were also outspoken supporters of Hitler and the Nazi party. This provocative film asks: how could something like this happen in the heart of Christian Europe? Could it happen again? How does the scholarship of this period affect the church today? Does the church of today retain the ability to recognize profound evil?

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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/>

REGISTRATION DEADLINE MAY 15! Presbytery Youth Triennium Conference July 19-26, 2010

We will be returning this summer to Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, for the Presbyterian Youth Triennium Conference. Our Presbytery youth delegation (limited to 25 participants) will join over 6,000 youth from around the globe at this special conference that is held every three years. We will be driving to Indiana by bus.

The conference will include large group sessions, small groups, great games, food, skits, energizers, and fellowship. We will be staying in the dorms on campus. It is a great way to meet people from around the world and to hear how God is working in the lives of so many individuals.

This conference is open to all 14-19 year old youth. Costs to all participants will be \$409. Our Presbytery will pay for the transportation and 1/2 of the chaperone's registration fees.

On the return trip, we will be visiting the Sears Tower in Chicago and will be spending a day at Noah's Ark Water Park in Wisconsin Dells, WI. Noah's Ark is the world's largest water park!

For more info, please go to: www.presbyterianyouthtriennium.org. If you have further questions about either of these opportunities, please contact Pastor Dave Thompson at (701) 252-1748 or dthompson@daktel.com.

PNP DIRECTORIES ARE NOW AVAILABLE

The Directory and Manual of Operation are complete and have been emailed and mailed out. If you have requested a copy (or need to) and have not received it, please contact the Presbytery office at 701-772-0783 or email pnppoffice@gmail.com.

This year, the Directory and Manual of Operations have gone through some changes. At the February Presbytery meeting it was approved to create a scaled down version. In the Directory, the first section, the committee pages, will remain the same. However the church pages will only contain church, pastoral leadership, clerk of session and treasurer contact information. The Manual of Operations is published in its entirety on the website and is also available in hard copy form by request. The website version of both the bylaws and policy section will be updated as soon as possible when Presbytery action is taken that impacts either section.

PNP IS NOW ON FACEBOOK

In an effort to help Presbyterians in the Northern Plains to connect with each other, the Presbytery now has a Facebook page. Facebook users may become members of the presbytery's group. The group will receive periodic event updates and is open to posts and discussion topics from members. You have to be a Facebook user to join the group, which is free. So become a fan of the presbytery and join in the fun.

PRESBYTERIAN PLANNING CALENDARS

The Presbytery office received a double shipment of 2010-2011 Presbyterian Planning Calendars. These are 19-month calendars beginning with June 2010. They contain aids for pastors and church leaders. If anyone is interest in purchasing a calendar for \$ 8.80 plus shipping (this is a savings of \$1.70 per calendar), please contact Laurie at 701-772-0783 or email pnppoffice@gmail.com.

Presbytery's Calendar

May 2-4	Synod Meeting
May 6	Council Mtg
May 6	National Day of Prayer
May 12	Chogoria Team Mtg
May 13	Leadership Development Task Force CC
May 14	Committee on Ministry Mtg
May 25	Committee on Preparation for Ministry Mtg
May 27	CLP Task Force Mtg
May 31	Memorial Day – Office Closed
June 3 & 4	Clergy Retreat (Casselton)
June 11 & 12	Special Presbytery Mtg at Jamestown College
June 22	Committee on Ministry CC
July 3 -10	General Assembly in Minneapolis
July 5	Independence Day holiday – office closed
July 19-26	Presbyterian Youth Triennium Conference
Aug 2	Budget & Finance Mtg
Aug 11	Council Mtg
Aug 12	Committee on Ministry Mtg

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 pnppoffice@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: Steve Minnema, David Thompson and Laurie Elhard

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

Laurie Elhard
Presbytery of the Northern Plains
5555 South Washington Street Suite A
Grand Forks, ND 58201
701-772-0783
pnppoffice@gmail.com