

Light of the Northern Plains

Presbytery of the Northern Plains

October 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, will have surgery later this month to repair an aneurysm behind her ear. Please keep Cori in your prayers during this time of recovery.

George Reichman, member of First Presbyterian Church of Mandan, has been having some health issues over the past couple of months. Please keep George in your prayers.



FALL PRESBYTERY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

By: Micheal Lochow, Stated Clerk

The Presbytery of the Northern Plains held its Ninety-Fifth Stated Meeting at the First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead on Friday and Saturday, October 3-4, 2008.

The Presbytery accepted the resignation of its Executive Presbyter, The Rev. Dr. Charles Traylor, and wished him well in his transfer to the Presbytery of East Tennessee. Chuck reminisced about his time in the Presbytery. The featured entree at a celebratory evening meal was the deep-fried turkeys prepared by The Revs. Steve Shive and Paul Kuhn. A search will begin for an interim executive while the Presbytery continues to examine its future mission.

The relationship with the Chogoria Presbyteries of the P.C.E.A. was strengthened with the approval of a Memorandum of understanding of our partnership. The Rev. Matt Stith emphasized the importance of clarifying the relationship between the presbyteries.

The Hope Korean Presbyterian Fellowship was recognized as a part of the Presbytery. The Fellowship is being served by Pastor Gyun Ho Tak. The Rev. Tak was received as a minister member of the Presbytery.

The terms of call for the Rev. Dan Billings, new pastor at the Midway Parish, were approved and Dan was welcomed by commissioners. Paul Snyder spoke of his faith journey and was accepted as an inquirer. Presbytery commissioned CLP Cathy Bliss to the First Presbyterian Church of Wilton and re-commissioned CLPs Kevin Kaufmann (Devils Lake, Minnewaukan and Webster), Lorilee Rude (Baker-Downer), Don Casmay (Argyle), Rick Larson (Dilworth), Mark Freuh (Minot) and Bill Weispfenning (Oakes).

At the recommendation of the Vision Task Force and Council a new vision statement was approved: **“A vibrant, informed, Presbyterian community which nourishes ministry and joins in Christ’s mission”.**

A number of financial items were also approved: the 2009 budget; a preliminary 2010 budget; a mileage reimbursement policy based on IRS mileage allowance rates; a revised reserve policy; and the United Mission Dollar distribution.

Smaller churches should note that the Board of Pensions has established a program to help support ministers in small churches (less than 200) take a sabbatical. New minimum salary guidelines were approved and churches which are unable to meet these guidelines should be in contact with the Committee on Ministry about fair compensation for their pastors.

The final report of the Willow City Church Closing Commission was received and the Commission was dismissed with the gratitude of the Presbytery for their work.

The January Presbytery meeting will be held on Friday and Saturday, January 23-24, 2009, at the Mendenhall Presbyterian Church, in East Grand Forks, Minnesota.

2009 Per Capita

General Assembly	\$ 6.15
Synod of Lakes & Prairies	\$ 4.80
Northern Plains Presbytery	<u>\$31.00</u>
Total 2009 Per Capita	\$41.95

The apportionment is based on church membership as of December 31, 2007 as reported in the 2007 General Assembly Minutes (Part 11, Statistics).

Recommended Unified Mission

General Assembly	20 %
Synod of Lakes & Prairies	20 %
Northern Plains Presbytery	60 %

GENERAL ASSEMBLY LETTER AND RESOURCE ABOUT CREDIT CRISIS



Dear Pastors and Elders:

We write out of concern for those in your congregations who are suffering loss of their homes, their jobs, their ability to meet other financial obligations or conduct their normal business activities.

Indeed, we recognize that even for those who may not be in immediate jeopardy, the current “credit crisis” has spread fear throughout the nation regarding the stability of our whole economic system.

Even as our legislators and financial advisors struggle to find solutions that address the disastrously complex problems exposed by this crisis, blame for the “melt-down” is being cast in all directions: from government failures to provide adequate regulatory safeguards, to investors intent on exploiting bizarre mortgage schemes, to ordinary citizens whose penchant for incurring disastrous levels of debt, there is blame enough to go around. Our Washington Office has witnessed to legislators on principles expressed by the General Assembly over time that relate to government’s service to the common good.

As followers of Jesus Christ, let us join in a call to our own people and to our fearful nation to hear God’s word that “perfect love casts out fear;” and let us look anew at our economic system—one which has been immensely productive in many respects, but which has tended to favor the strong and aggressive, often at great cost to the weak. Let us all repent of our own decisions, both personal and corporate, regarding our use of the earth’s resources and of the financial resources of which we have been made stewards. And let us make clear to our legislators and to those whose are charged with the management of this nation’s financial resources that any recovery of fiscal accountability must be accompanied with *moral* accountability for the unfortunate, so that the burdens and blessings of the future are fairly shared.

As you provide pastoral and prophetic leadership to your own people in the face of the ongoing crisis, we would like to offer some resources* that reflect efforts by recent General Assemblies to address many of the economic and moral issues facing our nation and the world at this juncture. As Reformed Christians, we are neither individuals nor congregations alone in times of crisis. With this social vision it will still be up to our communities—with our strong participation—to deal with these problems for the long term. The resources are listed on the following page, and we hope you may find them helpful.

In Christ’s Mission,

Bruce Reyes-Chow, Moderator of the 218th
General Assembly

Linda Valentine, Executive Director, General
Assembly Council

Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk, Office of the
General Assembly

RESOURCES:

1. The Washington Office letter: the Presbyterian Washington Office staff has communicated a summary of our social witness concerns to our Congressional representatives (see <http://www.pcusa.org/washington/financial-crisis-letter.pdf>). Our voice is one among many churches and other bodies concerned that public resources be used wisely in restoring confidence in the financial sector.
2. ***From Homelessness to Hope*** adopted by the 218th General Assembly (2008). This and other resolutions are available on the website of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy: www.pcusa.org/acswp. In addition to short-term and more holistic approaches to the problem of homelessness, this report contains some analysis of why—as the real estate bubble deflated—the market for affordable housing was also declining. The report notes that more than half of Presbyterian congregations already provide some assistance to homeless and hungry persons through food pantries, soup kitchens, various ministries to the homeless, including Habitat for Humanity, and ministries of advocacy, such as Bread for the World.
3. ***A Reformed Understanding of Usury***: the 217th General Assembly (2006) had spoken on the very topic of usury or exorbitant interest that was so evident in many of the “sub-prime” mortgages. This resolution also looks at credit card debt and abuses in short term loans, suggesting improvements in regulation to protect students and the working poor.
4. The **Just Neighbors “Toolkit:”** a resource for adult education that looks at housing and other economic pressures developed in the Roman Catholic community with assistance from the Presbyterian Hunger Program. See: www.justneighbors.org.
5. ***The Power to Change: US Energy Policy and Global Warming***. This careful study contains recommendations for the massive transition in energy consumption needed and points to personal approaches to reducing our “carbon footprints.” A sign of the new direction can be seen at Limestone Presbyterian Church of Limestone, Delaware, which recently re-did its sanctuary roof in solar collectors, predicting \$15,000 per year in saved energy costs.
6. ***A Social Creed for the 21st Century*** is a one-page, theologically grounded statement of what we stand for in relation to both globalization and sustainability, including issues of taxation and military spending. Those interested may find bulletin inserts and information on this non-doctrinal document on-line at www.pcusa.org/acswp. There is also a 28-minute DVD available for web-streaming and for mailing costs. The DVD traces the witness of the church from concern for early industrial pressures, through the Great Depression, through the Civil Rights struggle, and up to the current time. It is called, ***Toward a New Social Awakening, the Social Creed: 1908 to 2008***, and that title may speak to our current crisis as well.

GOOD-BYE AND THANK YOU



Dear Friends in Christ,

Sarah and I are so grateful for the many expressions of friendship and affection you have shared with us as we move to Tennessee. The "barbed wire fence around Yahweh's Ranch" cake at the Presbytery meeting, commemorative items from various churches, the

gorgeous Dave Nix photo of the wild horses of Medora, and a certain smooth libation, are each precious memories and at the same time ongoing reminders of our time among you.

Our mailing address and phone number in Tennessee will be:

138 Fred Braddock Road
Crab Orchard, TN 37723
931-484-4685

Fairfield Glade Community Church
521 Snead Drive
Crossville, TN 38558

All of you will be in our prayers daily. Come see us some January or February!

Grace and Peace, Chuck and Sarah Traylor

NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Congratulations to the following people, who were elected to a Presbytery Committee and start their new responsibilities January 2009:

Moderator	Pat O'Donnell, Grand Forks
Vice Moderator	Mary Jo Holtey, Fargo
Council	David Thompson (Chair), Jamestown
COM	*Daniel Wolpert, Crookston; Cheri Danielson, Cooperstown; Dixon Moorhead, West Fargo; *Catherine Bliss, Wilton.
CPM	***Kevin Kaufmann (Chair), Lake Region Parish; *Mindy Meier, Bdecan; Vicki Rucker, Bismarck; Eric Swee, Moorhead
Permanent Jud.	Barb Ault, Cavalier; Darrel Cory.
Session Records	Sylvia Pringle, Jamestown.
Budget & Fin.	Mark Weed, Fargo.
COR	*Kevin Schultz (Male Youth), Casselton
Synod	Marli Danielson, Tri-County Parish.

*Re-elected for a second term.

** Filling empty seat on committee, position starts immediately.

***Their position also holds a position on the Presbytery's Council.

The Committee on Nominations asks that you provide them with names for the next nomination process by filling the nomination forms. They need resources since not all persons who are mentioned to us are willing to serve at that particular time. One of the purposes of nominations is to provide more opportunities for elders and laity in particular to participate at the presbytery level. **It allows for more diversity and informs our Presbyterian community as well as nourishing our ministry as our new vision statement defines for us.**

RESOURCES ADVENT/CHRISTMAS

Clear View of the Birth of Jesus (Video/DVD)

By: [Dr. Kenneth E. Bailey](#)

A four-part series which examines the birth stories of Jesus in the context of the life and culture of the people of the Middle East. Each part is narrated by Dr. Kenneth E. Bailey, Th. D., Research professor of Middle Eastern New Testament studies at the Tantur Ecumenical Institute in Jerusalem. Length: 30 min. ea.

All I Want for Christmas: An Advent Study for Adults (Book):

This Advent study has four sessions – one for each Sunday of Advent. Each session is related to the overall theme of the book and includes a Scripture reference, a brief reflection, and study/discussion questions.

Christmas Promise (Book)

By: [Peg Augustine, ed.](#)

A collection of short dramas, speeches, recitations and finger plays for children from four through older elementary. Pieces can be combined into longer programs, or used in worship settings or Sunday school during Advent and Christmas. Dramas run 10 to 15 minutes and can be performed by any reading child.

Christmas Drama Collection: Four Short Dramas (Book):

Four short, easy-to-produce dramas for the Christmas season.

Programs for Advent and Christmas (Book):

A collection of ideas for Advent and Christmas programs, worship services, pageant of customs around the world, and other intergenerational activities.

Angel Band (Book): Children in grades 2-5 will learn this African American spiritual and the Christmas story as they work together to produce "The Angel Band." Includes teaching ideas and options for incorporating younger children, session plans, staging and costuming ideas, games and more. This is the Singer's Edition. There is also a Leader/Accompanist Edition. Includes a CD

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.

WELCOME THE BILLINGS TO THE PRESBYTERY



At the Fall Presbytery meeting, the Rev. Dan Billings was accepted into membership. Dan will be serving Midway Parish, which is a three point parish made up of Community Presbyterian Church of Forest River, Gilby Presbyterian Church and Inkster Presbyterian Church. Midway Parish is very pleased to have Pastor Dan and Lori (his wife) to lead and guide us to the future God has in mind for us.

Here is a little more info about the Billings: Born in St. Louis, MO, Pastor Dan grew up in Hastings, NE and Gillette, WY. He worked during the summers in the Wyoming oil fields to earn money to go to college at Rocky Mt. College, a Presbyterian related college in Billings, MT (no relation!). He followed his call from God and went to the Univ. of Dubuque Theological Seminary in Dubuque, IA. where he graduated with his Master of Divinity degree. Lori was born and raised in Fargo, ND. She graduated from NDSU and followed her call to the Univ. of Dubuque Theological Seminary. It was there she received her Master of Arts degree in Religion -- and met Dan. The rest is history.

Pastor Dan has served churches in Brookings, SD (internship), Smith Center, SD, Canby, MN and Pipestone, MN. They have two children. John and his wife, Roxanne, live in Mankato, MN, and Rebekah (Becky) is a graduate student at UND. Lori's mother Marilyn Olson is a member of First Presbyterian in Fargo. An important member of their family is Tootsie, their 3 yr. old German Shepherd, who seems to like it just fine in Gilby.

LIAISONS ARE STILL NEEDED



The annual training for Committee on Ministry (COM) Liaison has been set for November 1, 2008 at United Presbyterian Church in Jamestown, North Dakota.

Liaisons are volunteers who are trained as designees of COM to help COM meet its responsibilities to pastors, Christian educators, CLPs, sessions and congregations. Liaisons serve as long as they are happy to do so. In general, the major responsibility of a liaison is to develop a relationship with a nearby congregation: to offer support, to listen to needs and concerns, and to enhance communication.

The COM has been trying to implement a new approach to accomplish its work. The churches of Presbytery are divided into eight groupings. Each grouping of churches will have a contact person from COM. However, COM is having problems identifying and recruiting ministers or elders who are willing to serve as a COM liaison to another congregation in their grouping. Currently, the following congregations are without liaisons: First Presbyterian Church of Portal, First Presbyterian Church of Lisbon, Community Presbyterian of Argyle, Mendenhall Presbyterian Church of East Grand Forks, Emerado Presbyterian Church, Nekoma Presbyterian Church, First Presbyterian Church of Minot, and Westminster Presbyterian Church of Baker/Downer.

If you are an elder or pastor and would like to serve as a COM liaison or want additional information, please contact the moderator of COM, the Rev. Deanna Reikow, 701-663-5788 or 701-426-4133 (cell), or email fpcmandan@hotmail.com

Presbytery's Calendar

Oct 3-4	Fall Presbytery Meeting at First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead
Oct 16	ABS – CC 10:00 am
Oct 28	GFAC - CC
Oct 30	Council Meeting TBA
Nov 1	COM Liaison Training at United Presbyterian Church from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
Nov 27-28	Office Closed – Holiday
Dec 24-25	Office Closed – Holiday
Jan 23-24	Winter Presbytery Meeting at Mendenhall Presbyterian Church of East Grand Forks

CC = Conference Call
VCS = Video Conferencing Sites

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Chuck Traylor, Executive Presbyter
Laurie Elhard, Communications Coordinator

Other contributors: Chuck Traylor, Lori Billings, Micheal Lochow, Bruce Reyes-Chow, Linda Valentine, Gradye Parsons

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

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