

Light of the Northern Plains

Presbytery of the Northern Plains

September 2008

PRAYER CONCERNS

The Rev. Marvin J. Scherbenske, 89, of Kansas City, MO, formerly of Devils Lake, ND, and Honorably Retired member of the Presbytery, died on Tuesday, August 26, 2008 at the Woodbine Healthcare Center in Gladstone, MO. The family suggests that memorial contributions be given to Prison Fellowship, P.O. Box 1550 Merrifield, VA 22116-1550. Please keep the Scherbenske family in your prayers during this time.

Stephen Eastin, formerly a minister member of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains, died August 4, 2008 in Mandan, ND. He is survived by his wife, Laurie, and two children.

MEETING MATERAIL

Presbytery meeting material will be posted on the Presbytery website at www.northernplainspresbytery.com by noon on September 11, 2008 for congregations/individuals to download. For congregations that don't 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 am on September 24, 2008 to ensure you receive the packet in time.**

AT LEAST EIGHT REASON BE AT FIRST PRES-MOORHEAD IN OCTOBER



By: Michael Lochow, Stated Clerk

The Presbytery of the Northern Plains will be meeting on Friday and Saturday, October 3-4, 2008. The meeting will be hosted by the First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead, Minnesota. There are many new and exciting reasons to be at the First Presbyterian Church - Moorhead the first weekend in October. Consider the following:

- The Vision Task Force has completed its work and will be reporting. This is the time when they will be asking you, the members of the Presbytery, to become more involved in the ongoing visioning process. What is your vision of the Presbytery?
- Budget & Finance will be presenting a proposed budget for 2009 and a draft budget for 2010. The Committee has made changes in how expenses are budgeted and how the statements are presented.
- The Committee on Ministry will be presenting a number of Commissioned Lay Pastors for re-commissioning.
- The Committee on Preparation for Ministry has a new inquirer for us to meet and greet.
- Midway Parish will be introducing their new pastor, The Rev. Daniel Billings.
- The new Korean Fellowship in Grand Forks will be introduced.
- The Chogoria Partnership travelers have returned safely and will be telling of their journey and what the future holds. They have prepared a memorandum of agreement between the Presbytery and the Chogoria presbyteries of the PCEA for your consideration.
- Our commissioners who attended the 218th General Assembly in San Jose, California, will be reporting and available to answer your questions. The GA was busy - there are 33 proposed amendments to the Book of Order.

VISION TASK FORCE TO SUBMIT REPORT TO OCTOBER PRESBYTERY MEETING

The Vision Task Force: Cheryl Biller, Dixon Moorhead, Gretchen Graf, Paul Kuhn, Chuck Traylor (Staff)

Just about one year ago the Presbytery Council appointed a task force charged with seeking a vision of what our presbytery should do and be into the future. The challenges we face and the limitations we experience make it plain that business as usual for the presbytery is not a viable option.

The Vision Task Force is bringing its work to conclusion and will ask you to receive and adopt our recommendations at the October Presbytery Meeting. We have reported to Council and they have endorsed our report and send it to you for your approval.

We want to share some background with you so you can better understand what we'll talk about at that meeting. In response to a growing recognition of our presbytery's lack of direction and connection, the Task

Force was commissioned and constituted with the following members: Dixon Moorhead, Gretchen Graf, Steve Shive, Paul Kuhn, and Cheryl Biller. Executive Presbyter Chuck Traylor staffed the task force. Steve had to resign part way into our process due to time constraints.

We met about once a month over the last year, guided by the Scriptures and the Book of Order and having great (and often difficult) conversation. We told you we would visit as many of the churches of the Presbytery as possible, either ourselves or through COM liaisons, and we did that – getting input from about 35% of our congregations. We also considered demographic and other factors we face. It was not an easy year.

Our Presbytery, on its face, is full of problems, needs, and concerns. It's not hard to list limitations. Recognizing that we cannot do everything, we thought we could wisely begin by trying to determine what we need to do and what is required and also what we did not need to do, thereby allowing us to separate out what was really essential. This course of action got us very stuck, so stuck in fact, that we almost gave up.

It was only when we came together and let the Holy Spirit guide us to focus on what is possible rather than necessary or mandatory that we were able to move forward. Then we developed a working vision statement of the Northern Plains: **“A vibrant, informed Presbyterian community which nourishes ministry and joins in Christ’s mission.”** Countering all the seeming challenges, we said we want to:

Know more (study and train for service)

Be more (relate and connect in community)

Do more (collaborate in and support joint mission)

We will be asking you to endorse this interim vision statement, and to do what is necessary in suspending certain of our bylaws for a time in order to begin to live into what this vision might mean for us. As a beginning point, we believe the current COM Liaison model must be supported and energized to provide the connections we believe our presbytery needs. There are many details yet to be worked out. We ask, also, that you pray about this statement so that we may steep the presbytery meeting in the same Spirit-filled atmosphere we experienced when we let go of our frustrations and began to explore what was possible.

BUDGET, BUDGET AND BUDGET

By: The Rev. Gretchen Graf, Chair of Budget and Finance

Budgets! Not many of us enjoy reading them, writing them, or trying to follow them.

Bill Weispenning, our presbytery treasurer, has tried for several years to make it easier to understand our presbytery budget. His simplified reports summarize income and expenses, and a revised report will be unveiled at presbytery in October.

The Budget and Finance team works hard to help churches and presbyters understand the financial realities of our life together. For 2009, they have recommended and Council has agreed to bring to presbytery a two-part budget to help make our finances clearer.

We have two primary sources of funds: per capita and mission. The Synod of Lakes and Prairies supplements each of these with shared dollars they return to the presbytery. In 2009, we are recommending that all administrative expenses be taken from per capita and Synod salary support. These include staff salaries, office expenses, and meeting expense for presbytery and administrative committees (nominating, budget, personnel, etc.).

The expenses for presbytery programs will be taken from our mission giving and Synod mission support. This includes most of our committee expense, our gifts to Clearwater Forest and Jamestown College, and funds for educational or inspirational events. In 2009 and 2010 there will be a fund distributed by Council for mission in churches and committees (similar to Mission Initiative Grants). Anyone with a great idea for mission can apply for funding, even midyear. We hope this gives us the flexibility we need to respond to new opportunities.

The good news for 2009 is that both parts of our budget are balanced and the grant fund will have as much as \$40,000 to share. Financial folks are known for their cautions, however, and here's one for our presbytery: After this year, Synod funds will be phased out. The Synod can't share funds we don't give them, and giving to the Synod and General Assembly has decreased as financial conditions in the country are tight. So we will need to give serious prayer and conversation to ways to move forward. We simply will not be able to fund “business as usual” beyond 3-5 years in the future. Increased giving and/or decreased spending will be necessary, so we'll have to discern together what matters most in our work. Luckily, we have some time to do that if we begin now to envision our future.



ANNUAL RECORDS REVIEW



By: *Donald G. Hariman, Chair of Session Records Committee*

This notification is provided to inform all Clerks of Session and Moderators of congregations of the presbytery that opportunity for the mandated annual review of Session Records will be provided this year at four locations. All records will be reviewed in the month of September at these locations and at the designated times. Unlike in the past, **THERE WILL BE NO RECORDS REVIEW OFFERED AT PRESBYTERY MEETINGS.**

Changes in the manner of conducting the business of presbytery including video conference and shortened sessions make this method more efficient and we hope, more convenient. The sites for the readings are:

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| September 13, 2008 | Towner Presbyterian Church at 2:00 PM |
| September 13, 2008 | Westminster Presbyterian Church of Casselton at 2:00 PM |
| September 20, 2008 | First Presbyterian Church of Mandan at 2:00 PM |
| September 20, 2008 | Gilby Presbyterian Church at 1:30 PM |

Reporting forms were mailed out in August, contact the Presbytery office if you did not receive them. Please prepare these forms **in advance** since this will make the process operate smoothly. The first portion of the session will be informative and we will answer questions about procedures.

We look forward to having all the records read and reported at the October meeting of Presbytery. There will be **NO** other opportunities this year.

CLERGY COMMISSIONER NEEDED!

By: *Donald G. Hariman, Chair of Committee on Nominations*

The Nominating Committee is charged with making nominations of persons for the position of Commissioner to the Synod of Lakes and Prairies which is a three year term. The Policy of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains (P-6.0104) requires that such candidates must submit a statement “describing their desire, qualifications and sense of being called to serve the presbytery as commissioner”.

The person may be self nominated, or nominated by his/her Session or Parish Board.

This year the position open is for a **CLERGY COMMISSIONER.**

Please address all nominations and statements to the Chair of the committee either by land mail (Don Hariman 815 40th Avenue South Grand Forks, ND 58201) or by email (donhar@gra.midco.net). Nominations should be received as soon as possible to be considered.

RESOURCES

Shalom of God in the Midst of Empire, The: A Peace Making Bible Study on Isaiah (Book/Bible Study)

By: [Rebecca J. Kruger Gaudino](#)

The six sessions of this study consider six Isaiah texts. The first two analyze the patterns of empire in which we participate that contradict and destroy the shalom that God intends for human community. The next two texts explore how we may realign and re-tune ourselves to the voice and vision of God. The final two texts call us to bold, daring action and openness that claim God's vision of shalom for our communities and lives.

House of Prayer for All Peoples (Book/Bible Study)

A Bible study on Isaiah 56 created for the 215 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. The study is designed for use by either an individual or a group of people who want to study the words of an ancient prophet of Israel, and how those words still speak to believers today. There are six sessions.

Tokens of trust: An introduction to Christian belief (Book)

By: [Williams, Rowan](#)

Engaging the classic statements of the Nicene and Apostles' creeds, Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams guides readers through the central elements of Christian faith.

Sure Can Use a Little Good News: 12 Gospel Plays in Rhyme (Book)

By: [Burkart, Jeffrey E.](#)

People involved in church drama have the rare privilege of bridging the Word and life for God's people. But where the Word is, there the Spirit is as well. And where the Spirit is, there is always drama. The dramas in this section depict a truth that Jesus exhibited again and again — the Word of God is illustrated all around us. A collection of short, lively, and humorous plays based on the events and parables of Jesus' ministry for ages 12 through adult. Use the plays for chancel dramas, Gospel readings in church, Sunday school and VBS, school openings, and discussion starters for youth and adult Bible study programs. Scripts are reproducible.

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.

DEVELOPING SPIRITUALLY FOCUSED LEADERS WORKSHOP

The Emerging Churches Coaching Team of the Presbytery of Northern Plains is excited to host a FREE workshop, September 24th on Developing Spiritually Focused Leaders. The workshop will be at First Presbyterian Church in Moorhead, and will focus on the following topics:

- 1) You can't lead where you're not going
- 2) Becoming the model you were created to be
- 3) Raising up spiritual leaders
- 4) Accountability that changes lives

You'll not only be inspired to be better for the gospel after this workshop, you'll get valuable tips and lessons in practical ways to do this.



The workshop will be led by the Rev. Bill Tenny-Brittian, Senior editor of Net Results and Senior consultant and partner with Easum Bandy and Associates. Bill is an energetic, funny, and engaging speaker and coach whose personal mission "is to be a source for spiritual transformation. He says, "... it's not only what I do, it's who I try to be."

Anyone working in the church, in paid and volunteer positions, is welcome – pastors, staff, CE directors, small group leaders, committee chairs, elders, and deacons. The experience of this workshop will be best realized if two or more from your church are able to attend together, so gather up your colleagues and friends for a day of motivation and learning!

What: Developing Spiritually Focused Leaders Workshop
 When: Wednesday, September 24, 2008
 Time: 9:00 am – 4:00 pm (lunch provided, free will offering)
 Where: First Presbyterian Church, 2900 5th Street South Moorhead, MN 56560
 Cost: FREE!!!

We can only accommodate 200 people, so reserve your spot soon: Cheryl Biller at 701.371.2809 or email cheryl@plantproinc.com

IRS INCREASES MILEAGE RATES THROUGH DEC 31

In recognition of recent gasoline price increases, the IRS made this special adjustment for the final six months of 2008. The IRS normally updates the mileage rates once a year in the fall for the next calendar year. Taxpayers may use the optional standard rates to calculate the deductible costs of operating an automobile for business, charitable, medical or moving purposes.

The rate will increase to 58.5 cents a mile for all business miles driven from July 1, 2008, through Dec. 31, 2008. This is an increase of eight (8) cents from the 50.5 cent rate in effect for the first six months of 2008, as set forth in [Rev. Proc. 2007-70](#).



Presbytery's Calendar

Sept 4	ABS Meeting by CC
Sept 9	Staff Meeting by VCS
Sept 9	COM Meeting by CC
Sept 13	SDOP training at First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead
Sept 21	Rev. Dan Billings installation at Gilby Presbyterian Church @ 4:00 pm
Sept 24	Developing Spiritually Focused Workshop at First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead 9:00 am – 4:00 pm
Sept 25-26	ND 101
Sept 28-30	Synod Meeting
Oct 3-4	Fall Presbytery Meeting at First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead
Oct 30	Council Meeting TBA
Nov 27-28	Office Closed – Holiday
Dec 24-25	Office Closed – Holiday

CC = Conference Call
 VCS = Video Conferencing Sites

How 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 Mission Advocacy Ministry Team (MAMT) of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains.

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Other contributors: Don Hariman, Cheryl Bill, Gretchen Graf, Michael Lochow, Paul Kuhn, and Dixon Moorhead.

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

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