

Care for Congregations Report

Fall 2024

BOP Changes in 2025

Deanna Reikow and Sarah Bigwood traveled to Denver in April to learn about the changes to Board of Pensions coverage for pastors. Sarah has been reaching out to all of our PNP pastors and CLPs to inform them of the changes and encouraging them to look at how the changes might affect their churches in January 2025. ***The Board of Pensions plan will not change in your favor unless you take action, so please be aware of your options.*** In August, the Leadership POD approved the Board of Pensions Assistance Program to offer help to churches experiencing increases. If you have any questions about how your church might be affected, please contact Sarah at sbigwood@firstpresfargo.org. If we don't have the answers, we will connect you with someone who does.

Inkster

The building has been taken down and cleared out. The land is not worth the agent fees. The church will transfer \$5,000 to Gilby and \$5,000 to Forest River. There is a fund with the Presbyterian Foundation that they are transferring to the Midway Parish for youth ministry. They will give the rest to the Inkster Cemetery.

Motion: to release the Administrative Commission for the Inkster Church upon the successful transfer of all funds held by Presbyterian Foundation to the Midway Parish.

Cooperstown

Cooperstown remains an active participant in the ecumenical parish of Tri-County Ministries, which includes 5 Lutheran churches. Rusty Bender was with Tri-County Ministry on August 4 to preach at an all-church service involving all 6 member-churches of the parish. They met at Red Willow Bible Camp near Binford, ND. All of the other members who provide pulpit supply within the parish were actively involved with the service. They did a very nice blessing for Rusty to send him off to my ministry as Director of Church Life at FPC Fargo and as he begins his journey to seminary at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. They have also awarded Rusty with a scholarship for seminary.

Devils Lake

Rev. Trudy Dumont has successfully negotiated a full-time yoked position between Westminster Presbyterian and Peace Lutheran (NALC) in which the Lutheran congregation is covering 75% of her salary and pension. ***This is an example of how churches can work together within the community to retain good pastors.*** If your

church is interested in such an arrangement and there is a potential to work with a pastor already in your area, please contact Sarah Bigwood at sbigwood@firstpresfargo.org.

Fargo – Baker Downer

The Baker Downer congregation voted in June to consolidate with FPC Fargo. They closed for the summer and relaunched on September 15, 2024. Despite being closed for the summer, they remained active in their community, providing ice cream sundaes during softball games and hosting an outdoor worship service complete with s'mores roasted over the fire pit. In August the sanctuary was repainted and new sound equipment was installed in preparation for the relaunch. Rev. Mary Holtey presided over a service at the old Downer Church, now located in Rollag, MN on August 25, 2024.

Forest River

The Leadership POD approved a grant for \$2,500 from the Small Church Ministries Support Fund to support their local backpack program. Forest River is a successful example of how the Presbytery can support ministry throughout the Presbytery. ***If your church has an active ministry that needs Presbytery support, check out our grant options at northernplainspresbytery.com/grants.***

Hallock

The congregation worships at 10 AM Sundays. They celebrated Easter together in style. Towards the end of June they will have a blessing of the animals event. Like other churches, they struggle with declining and aging membership. They have offers to purchase land.

Many years ago, the Hallock Presbyterian Church merged with the Northcote Presbyterian Church and the Orleans Presbyterian Church. The Hallock church still owns the lots the churches were on. The buildings themselves are long gone. The session of the Hallock church has been granted permission to sell the property.

Moorhead

First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead continues to wrestle with whether to sell their building or pursue a consolidation with FPC Fargo. Consolidation with FPC Fargo is slowing down so that trust can be built between the two congregations.

Rhame

The Presbyterian Church in Rhame celebrated Memorial Day with an afternoon service. Elder Rusty Bender attended the service and wrote an article about it for the PNP June newsletter. The congregation was very grateful for the Presbytery connection and pleased to show off their progress on fixing up their church.

West Fargo

Lay preachers from their congregation faithfully cover worship all but one Sunday per month. They held a picnic at the end of June. They have a newly hired office manager and have an active search for a full-time pastor. West Fargo posted their MDP (formerly CIF) in the PCUSA pastor search tool. Several candidates have matched but few have

chosen to release their information. Getting candidates to look at churches in ND is difficult.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Sarah M. Bigwood

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Committee Members: Deanna Reikow, Sarah Bigwood, Cathie Bishop, Rusty Bender.