

## The Northern Plains Conference



United Church of Christ  
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### **AWARE**

A Monthly newsletter  
supporting the building of community  
in the NPCUCC

a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-national community of faith  
**July 2008**

### ***As I Look At It:***

#### **In the Rear View Mirror**

Often as one leaves an event, there is a moment when you look back in the rear view mirror and take a snap shot of all that has happened. This is a moment of assessment. Many times, we are amazed by what we discover. We may find new meanings in what has happened, or we may discover that while we were very busy we really did not accomplish what we had thought. The view in the rear view mirror can be exciting and uplifting and at other times frustrating. It can either call us to rejoice at what has taken place or vow to work harder that we might do better in the future. As I look at the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Northern Plain Conference United Church of Christ in the Rear View Mirror I come to some very interesting conclusions.

My first conclusion is that of gratitude to Emmanuel United Church of Christ of Hankinson, Union Congregational United Church of Christ of Hankinson and the United Church of Christ of Christ of Wahpeton for being such caring and helpful hosts. It was a pleasure to work with the members and pastors of the congregations and I want to thank them for their caring and committed support. A special word of thanks goes to Paul and Lucy Bladow for their many hours of work making sure everything was ready.

As I review the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Northern Plains Conference in the Rear View Mirror, I am impressed by the reality that while we spent time looking at the historic aspects of a Conference Meeting, the minutes of past meetings, the audit report, the income and expense report of the past year and the like, we did not stop there. We took time to lift up the blessings that we have as a Conference. Gifts that God has placed within the NPCUCC congregations and their members. Then we began to search for the answer to the next question; "To What Is God Calling Us Through These Gifts?" God's gifts are keys that unlock the future, keys that we must use if we want to experience God's vision.

God has given to the Northern Plains Conference a diverse history composed of a panorama of events that are both painful and joyous. Upon this vast reservoir of historic experience, we are to place the foundation of a future that promises to be exciting, challenging and meaningful. One of our discoveries was that the strength to meet our future lies in uniting the gifts that God has given to us that like pieces in a puzzle they might become the message of hope for our tomorrow. While we do not have a clear picture of what tomorrow for the NPCUCC will look like, it seems apparent that meaningful worship that praises God's living presence among us, compassionate service that embraces one another in neighborly love and understanding and vigorous outreach that carries healing grace to distant places will be central to it.

The vision in the rear view mirror assures me that the coming year will be both exciting and challenging. I pray that we might welcome God's grace and love to be both our strength and our guide.

*Grace and Peace*  
**Wade**

#### **Pastors and Lay Leaders Workshop Scheduled for August 22 & 23**

Charlene J. Smith of the National Church will be with us in Northern Plains Conference, leading a workshop entitled "God is Still Speaking, Do Not Fear." Its goal is to equip pastors and lay leader to guide congregations through those times when confusion and uncertainty can keep them from moving forward. As you make your plans to participate be mindful that the Conference will cover the cost of program and meals while lodging and travel will be the responsibility of the participants. The workshop will begin at Zion United Church of Christ in Medina at 6:00 pm (ct) on August 22<sup>nd</sup> and will conclude by 4:00 pm (ct) on Saturday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>. So that we can prepare for your participation, please register with the Conference Office as soon as possible. All who wish to have lodging in Medina should make arrangements through the Conference Office.

Participants are encouraged to prepare by reading Paul Nixon's book "I Refuse to Lead a Dying Church" and Martha Grace Reese's "Unbinding the Gospel." One can find both books on Amazon.com.

### **Did You Know ...?**

... about the free help with your planned Giving Ministry that is available because of your support to OCWM? UCC members can download a free "Local Church Planned Giving Manual" at [www.ucc.org/giving.local-church-planned-giving.html](http://www.ucc.org/giving.local-church-planned-giving.html). You may also call toll-free 800 846 6822 for a free Planned Giving Sampler Packet and a master for making bulletin inserts. In addition, when members decide to make a planned gift they can call this number for their personalized gift annuity proposal, illustrating the income they can expect to receive for their lifetime, with the remainder gifting their church or charitable organization.

### **Stewardship Task Force Seeks Mission Ambassadors**

The Mission Ambassadors project that began Fall 2007 will continue into the coming year. We invite congregations to continue to seek Mission Ambassadors from among their lay leaders. These are folk who could be trained to bring the message of the ways in which the UCC and the NPC answer the call to be in mission in the name of Jesus the Christ. Each Mission Ambassador would visit a number of congregations with the message of hope and promise. Mission Ambassador Training sessions will take place September 13 at 11:00 a.m., Sept 18 at 6:00 p.m. and Sept 20 at 11:00 a.m. Any questions? Contact the Conference Office.

### **Tent of Hope**

During the Annual Meeting In Hankinson many participants took time from the busy Conference Schedule to paint their design on the Tent of Hope which was put up outside. The Tent of Hope is a Fund raising project to help the people of Darfur who have undergone warfare for over a generation. The pain these people have endured is enormous, and NPCUCC congregations are invited to use this Tent of Hope as a fundraiser for their congregation's response. The Tent is currently in Wahpeton but soon it will be ready to move on across the State. If you have questions please contact Lindy Holt (701 430 0727) or the Conference Office.

### **New Orleans Mission Trip Plans Coming Together**

Thanks to the efforts of Lindy Holt, NPCUCC Disaster Coordinator, and the enthusiasm of past participants, the 2nd NPCUCC New Orleans Mission Trip is coming together. This trip will actually begin in New Orleans with participants providing their own transportation. The dates for the mission outing are November 16 – 23. Any who would like to become involved in a project that can make a real difference in the lives of people are encouraged to make plans to take part in this project. If you have questions do not hesitate to call the Conference Office or Rev. Lindy Holt at 701 430 0727.

### **Plans are Underway for National Youth Event**

To date, 29 are registered for the National Youth Event, July 22 – 30. This event holds promise of being a very special time for all who participate. It is anticipated the 4000 UCC youth will gather for times of celebration, exploration and service. Please check flier on the NPCUCC Web Site, [www.npcucc.org/fliers/Summer\\_Camp\\_Brochure](http://www.npcucc.org/fliers/Summer_Camp_Brochure)., for more information or call the Conference Office at 701 255 1104.

### **NPCUCC Summer Camp at Wesley Acres**

Northern Plains Conference Youth should make plans now to attend the 2008 Summer Camp at Wesley Acres near Valley City. The camp will take place August 3 – 7. There are special activities planned, programs prepared and worship services readied. Any youth who are interested in attending should contact the Conference Office or Adjunct Co-Youth Advisor, Darcy Borden at 701 845 1977.

### **The UCC Responds to Tornado and Flood Damage Across the Mid West**

Thousands Impacted ... Volunteers Begin Response Efforts ... More Storms Predicted.

Flooding in the Mid West has turned streets into rivers and rivers into wild torrents that burst through dams and thundered over banks, destroying buildings and forcing the evacuation of hundreds of homes in the region. These floods follow tornadoes that struck some of the same communities that are now flooded.

The United Church of Christ National Disaster Ministries seeks \$200,000 for current response and long-term recovery efforts. Donations should be sent to the NPCUCC Conference office, labeled "Flood Relief." Efforts are underway to help send clean up kits to the affected areas.

### **NPCUCC Congregations Seeking Leadership**

Bismarck United Church of Christ, seeks a director of Christian Ed.

Salem United Church of Christ, New Salem is seeking pastoral leadership

**The NPCUCC Calendar for July**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>
7/1	-----	CM Retreat	Fly Home
7/4	-----	Independence Day	-----
7/5	11:00 am (ct)	ALWL #2	-----
7/6	8:30 am (ct)	CM Leads Worship	New Salem
7/8	11:00 am (ct)	Evangelism Task force	-----
7/10	9:00 am (ct)	Prairie Climate and Stewardship Workshop	Bismarck
7/11	8:30 am (ct)	Prairie Climate and Stewardship Workshop	Bismarck
7/13	10:30 am (ct)	Flasher UCC Centennial Service	Flasher, ND
7/14	11:00 am (ct)	Central Cluster	Valley City
7/15	4:00 pm (ct)	Finance Committee	Bismarck
7/16	12:00 Noon	Progressive Faith Network	Bismarck
7/16	6:00 pm (ct)	NDHRC Board	Fargo
7/20	2:30 pm	100 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Service	Bethel/New Salem
7/22-7/30	-----	National Youth Event	Knoxville, Tenn.
7/27	10:00 am (ct)	CM shares in worship	Carrington