

AWARE

A Monthly newsletter
supporting the building of community
in the NPCUCC
a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual,
multi-national community of faith
October 2008



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As I Look At It:

“Handle With Care”

One sign of growing old, is that your memory of an earlier time is so different from the current reality. One of my memories that falls into such a category, is going with my father to a construction site, or even to a hardware store, and buying dynamite. This meant there were some stumps or a boulder that needed to be removed, and a little dynamite would go a long way towards getting that job done. I am not saying I had any real expertise when it came to handling dynamite, but I did work with it, in the company of my father, and had a deep respect and expectation of it. I knew how dangerous it was, and also what it was capable of doing. I knew that when you pushed the plunger something was going to happen. A great power would be released. I knew how to place the charge, pack it, wire it, get a proper distance away and “Let it Rip”. While dynamite is scary stuff, I learned how to live with it in an environment of support and not fear. Dynamite gives little room for mistakes, but enormous latitude for expectation. With proper amounts and placement you can move mountains. I learned to use this powerful substance under the watchful, observant, critical, supportive and loving eyes of my home.

We in the church have a similar responsibility to that of the home when it comes to using the explosive power of the transformative love of God. While it is not destructive like dynamite, it is explosive. We need to learn to set it free in and through us for what it can do, can change the world. Often we hold back because we are afraid of what God’s transformative love would do if it was set free in our communities, homes and lives. For it is a life changing experience. The transformative love of God lights fires of hope in the midst of despair, invites us to new tomorrows when we can only see yesterdays, builds community in seas of mistrust, heals the wounds of yesterday, while sharpening our vision of tomorrow. But learning to use something that powerful calls for not only technical skill but also faithful courage. The classroom for such powerful instruction is the family of God---The Church.

It is through the church that this transformative love becomes the flowing stream of God’s continued Creative presence in our world. This means the church has a responsibility to God to enable its members to be the people that God would call them to be. If the church will not guide and support its members as God calls them to be agents of transformative love in the world, who in God’s name will? We in the church have a mission and it is the empowerment of our members to be God’s servants. We cannot pass this mission off, for there is no one else to take it. I believe God will hold us accountable for the world we leave as our legacy. I believe that we will be held accountable for the degree to which God’s transformative love has seen a source of renewal and hope in our communities, homes and world. Will our legacy be a world in which God’s vision is alive and well or a world in fear of what the future will hold? I believe the difference will be how well we have empowered our brothers and sisters in the church as they seek to answer God’s call by being channels of God’s grace.

*In Jesus’ name.
Wade*

All NPCUCC Women are invited to join in the Fall Women’s Retreat

All the women of the Northern Plains Conference are invited to participate in the NPCUCC Women’s Retreat October 10 – 12 at Maryvale, “An Invitation to Prayer – Finding Your Peace Shell.” This is an opportunity for fellowship, personal reflection and Spiritual renewal. Guest presenters are Shirley Nelson of CHSM and Gayla Sherman of Charles Hall Youth Services. Information and registration forms are on the NPCUCC website at www.npcucc.org/html/forms.php. If you have any questions please contact the Conference Office. This gathering is an excellent opportunity for the women of the Conference to get together, sharing hopes and dreams, discovering that their shared faith is healing, empowering and sustaining.

Congregations of the Northern Plains Conference Seeking Pastoral Leadership

Salem United Church of Christ, New Salem
Bismarck United Church of Christ (Christian Education Director), Bismarck

Congregational Exchange visits October 5

We invite NPCUCC Congregations to exchange visits on World Wide Communion Sunday, October 5th, by sending 4 – 6 members from their congregation to a neighboring one. They will bring the communion bread and a one page piece celebrating their ministry to be read during the service. The exchanges will be worked out at the September Cluster gatherings. A special liturgy will be available for use upon receiving the communion bread. The celebration piece the visiting delegations will read in the host worship service should be printed in the bulletin of the home congregation. Please email copies of the celebration piece for the booklet to the Conference Office by October 2nd, for compiling into a booklet

Neighbors in Need Offering to be received October 5
“Imagine Another World Is Possible” is the call of the 2008 Neighbors In Need Offering. This offering gives all of us the opportunity to stand with our brothers and sisters in the most challenging times of their lives. It is an invitation to be there in Jesus’ name and to make a difference as only faith based action can make. Please take this opportunity to respond to the needs of a frightened and hurting world. You will be glad you did.

The Conference Quilt As Your Faith Statement

Each congregation received a quilt square in one packet at the Annual Meeting. It is our hope that each congregation will present one quilt square declaring the faith of the members of the congregation. These quilt squares can be in any way the congregations chooses. The statements can be elaborate, they can be simple, they can be drawn, embroidered, painted, how ever you choose to share your faith statement. Please return the quilt squares to the Conference Office by January 15, 2009 so that they can be sewn into quilts to be displayed at the 2009 NPCUCC Annual Meeting in Minot. If you have questions or need another quilt square, please contact the Conference Office.

NPCUCC Congregations Welcome the Tent Of Hope

The Tent of Hope was first displayed to the Northern Plains Conference at the Annual Meeting and is now making the rounds of the Conference Congregations. Has your congregations hosted it yet? The tent raises awareness of the situation in Darfur, where civil war has cost thousands of lives. We invite each congregation to use the tent to involve the members to make a statement for peace and understanding and to raise funds for the survivors and refugees of this awful tragedy. You may take a special offering or invite people to make a donation for each time they paint on the tent or a separate piece. If you are interested, there is a Bible Study piece entitled "Not On Our Watch," a Biblical reflection on the mission to end genocide in Darfur and beyond. You can get more information about this at www.darfurchristianaction.org. You may wish to use this along with the visit of the tent. If you have questions, please contact the Conference Office.

Faith Alive In the NPCUCC Through Mission

Each month in time for the 3rd Sunday, a bulletin insert will be emailed to the pastor of each congregation celebrating the life and ministry of one of our congregations. You are invited to join the celebration by including that insert in your Sunday bulletin and lifting it up at announcements time. You are also invited to submit special announcements of the times when the Faith has been alive in your congregation's midst as they engaged in the mission to which Christ calls all of us. Please limit your contribution to a few paragraphs to fit on a half sheet of paper.

Fall Youth Rally 2008

CALLING ALL 5th through 12th Graders of our Northern Plains Conference to come out to the "Spreading the Spirit" Fall Youth Rally. This years Fall Rally will be Thursday, October 23rd through Saturday, October 25th at the Congregational United Church of Christ of Valley City. Additional information will be coming soon. Check out <http://www.npcucc.org/html/fliers.php>, the Northern Plains Conference website for more information and updates. If you need a hard copy of the information, please contact the Co-Adjunct Youth Ministers Rev. Carl & Rev. Darcy Borden via e-mail at congregational.ucc.valleycity@gmail.com or 701-845-1977.

Children's Sabbath National Observance Oct. 17-19

The Children's Defense Fund invites people of faith to hold a special service of celebration and commitment joining in the National Children's Sabbath Observance October 19. This is a special time for people of faith to lift up our call to guide, support, understand and love our children. If you have any questions, call the Conference Office. Information and supportive materials can be found at the website for the CDF www.childrensdefense.org/Childrens_Sabbaths.

New Orleans Mission Trip November 16-23

Thanks to the efforts of Lindy Holt, NPCUCC Disaster Coordinator, and the enthusiasm of past participants, the 2nd NPCUCC New Orleans Mission Trip will begin November 16-23 in New Orleans. Participants will provide their own transportation. Any who want to join a project that makes a real difference in the lives of people should plan to participate. Questions? Call the Conference Office or Rev. Lindy Holt at 701 430 0727.

Responding to Hurricane "IKE"

As Hurricane Ike heads toward the Texas coast, we will want to keep people in our prayers. The UCC has established a special appeal so it can address needs in the Caribbean and the US this hurricane season. Congregations wishing to take a special offering are invited to do so, identifying their contribution as Hurricane Relief. In addition, congregations are asked to provide 1,001 clean up buckets, as in 1997, to Church World Service to assist with clean up. For the latest information please check http://www.ucc.org/disaster/2008-tropical_storm.html

The Schedule for October

Date	Time	Event	Location
10/2	11:00 am (ct)	NDHRC Conference Call	-----
10/2	7:00 pm (mt)	Closing service	Hettinger
10/3	-----	Conference Committees	Carrington
10/4	9:00 am (ct)	Conference Council	Carrington
10/5	9:00 am /10:30 am (ct)	CM shares in worship	Bismarck
10/7	7:00 pm (ct)	CM speaks at Faith and Fairness Town Hall Forum	Fargo
10/10-11	-----	NDHRC Annual Meeting/Conference	Fargo
10/14	10:00 am (ct)	MV Cluster	Bismarck
10/15	11:00 am (ct)	Minot Cluster	Minot
10/16	10:00 am (ct)	Fargo Cluster	Moorhead
10/18	9:00 am (ct)	Yankton College Class	Fargo
10/18	11:00 am (ct)	ALWL #3	-----
10/19	-----	Children's Sabbath	-----
10/19	3:00 pm (ct)	Installation Service for Merilyn Levine	New Town
10/20	7:00 pm (ct)	Annual Meeting Planning	Minot
10/22	12:00 Noon (ct)	Ft. Berthold Cluster	New Town
10/23-25	-----	Fall Youth Rally	Valley City
10/25	-----	Called To Care	Fargo
10/26	-----	Closing Service	New Leipzig
10/27	11:00 am (ct)	*Central Cluster	-----
10/28-31	-----	West Central Regional	Nebraska