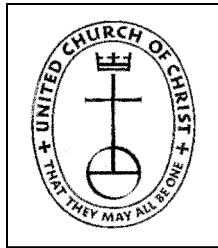


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AWARE
A Monthly newsletter
supporting the building of community
in the NPCUCC
a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual,
multi-national community of faith
November 2008

As I Look At It:

I wonder whether anyone of us has not lifted up a prayer asking that the election could come soon and the political rhetoric stop. While I agree that the name calling, truth embellishing, accomplishment inflating, grandstanding language lends credence to the assumption that politics is a dirty word, I am also aware that it is the way that communities organize. It is the way that we make decisions about those vital issues that are of concern to all of us. While I, like you, cringe when I hear the mudslinging and question in my mind if what I just heard is truthful, I do recognize that what we have is better than an armed revolution, and that while it needs improvement, it does provide an opportunity for those who wish, to assess and make the changes they deem necessary. For our political process, with all its apparent flaws, is the way that we develop public policy. It is, after all, through our public policy that we live out the commandment to "Love Neighbor as we Love Ourselves."

I therefore believe that we in the church have a place in this political arena. While the church should not name the candidate that should win or the party that should carry the day, the church must be a listening portal for those who are struggling to meet the demands of life. We must be the community that hears the still small voice and respects the life of those seldom heard if we truly wish to answer Jesus' command to love neighbor and self. The church cannot turn a deaf ear to those whom others would ignore.

We must believe that our vote makes a difference. There are times when we seem so small and the process so great that it might cause us to wonder if it matters if we vote or not. I believe that the answer is that it not only matters if we vote, but if we believe that our vote is important. Voting is not an empty ritual, I believe that voting is a civic responsibility and faithful voting is part of the call we all have to be disciples in our time and in our place.

As a modern day disciple of Jesus the Christ, we are to be responsive to Jesus' appeal to followers to be actively involved in seeking the common good. Jesus did not give us the opportunity to merely lift up empty criticism, or to make critical comments from a safe distance that was beyond question, Jesus is calling on us to make our comments where they can make a difference, to cast our vote, and then to hold our elected servants accountable to the needs we as people of faith hear. Let us remember when we vote, that as a follower of Jesus the Christ, we have as a model, the One who continually challenged the powers and principalities in search of that divine vision of Justice. Jesus' ministry on this Earth was focused on the responsibility of those with power and wealth to care for "The Least of these." We can do no less in the voting booth.

There is little doubt that our nation is in crisis. Therefore well-minded and faithful folk need to bring the tools of their faith to bear on the formation of our future. We should know by now that fear and greed are not the basis for wise decisions, but that the endless love of God in Jesus is. Therefore on November 4th, let us vote our faith, and then let us hold our elected officials accountable.

*In Jesus' name.
Wade*

The Conference Quilt as Your Faith Statement

Each congregation received a quilt square at the Annual Meeting. We hope that each congregation will present one quilt square declaring the faith of the members of the congregation. These quilt squares can do this in any way the congregations chooses. The statements can be elaborate, they can be simple, they can be drawn, embroidered, painted, in whatever way 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.

Faith Alive In the NPCUCC through Mission

Each month in time for the 3rd Sunday, a bulletin insert will be e-mailed 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.

Last Call! 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 are to 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.

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

Responding to Hurricane "IKE"

As Hurricane Ike has done its destructive work in Texas, we want to keep people in our prayers. The UCC established a special appeal to address needs in the Caribbean and the US this hurricane season. Congregations wanting to receive a special offering should do so, identifying the contribution as Hurricane Relief. Congregations are also asked to provide 1,001 clean up buckets, as in 1997, to Church World Service to assist with clean up. For the information, please check http://www.ucc.org/disaster/2008-tropical_storm.html

Calls to pastors on behalf of the Stewardship Task force

Calls will be made to all NPCUCC pastors in the next several weeks to inquire if extra materials or other support is needed as the congregations prepare for their Stewardship Drive. The purpose of the calls is to make sure that needed resources are available to the congregations. Any pastor who would like to have this discussion earlier is invited to call the Conference Office so that arrangements can be made.

Stewardship Committee Challenges Congregations to raise OCWM by 5% for 09

Due to rising costs, the NPCUCC is calling on the congregations of the Northern Plains Conference to raise their support of OCWM by 5% for 2009. This challenge is in response to dropping support of OCWM by congregations over the past years and the need for the Conference to not only continue that which we have been doing but to expand the vision of ministry for the Conference. Congregations are invited to call the Conference Office if they have concerns about this.

Luther Snow to be leader for the Post Lenten Retreat April 26 – 28 at Maryvale.

Luther Snow author of "The Power of Asset Mapping," "The Organization of Hope" and "Community Transformation, Turning Threats into Opportunities" will lead the NPCUCC post Lenten Retreat at Maryvale April 26 – 28, 2009. This year we will be working with CHARIS, which will be sharing with us on Monday, April 27th. Please watch for fliers and registration materials in the near future.

Notes from the Media Resource Center\

The Media Resource Center has a 24 lecture series by Amy-Jill Levine of Vanderbilt University Divinity School on the Great figures of the New Testament. This course is on CD and the course guidebook is available through the Media Resource Center, in Sioux Falls. If you have questions please feel free to contact the Conference Office.

Charles Hall Walkathon raises over \$25,000

Thanks to the many who gave of their time to walk and those who supported the effort with pledges, the 7th annual Charles Hall Walk A Thon netted over \$25,000. This year there were over 150 walkers. It was held September 14th at the Bismarck Zoo. Please check the NPCUCC web site www.npcucc.org for more information.

OCWM Survey

Via e-mail, each congregation received an OCWM survey that asks about the process and method of determining the level of OCWM support for each congregation. Each congregation is invited to take a moment and answer the questions so that we might more effectively work together in meeting the needs of the ministry we share locally, state wide and nationally.

There may be Grant Money for Your Congregation's Project!

Money may be available upon application for worthy projects, by churches. For important information needed to apply for a grant please see "What Enquiring Funders Want to Know," at Information—Grants on the Northern Plains Conference Website (<http://www.npcucc.org/html/grants.php>). The Conference Grant Request Writer, R. J. Stohler, will be glad to explore with you possible funding for your project. You are invited to contact him at 1537 48th St. S. #108, Fargo, ND 58103, rjstohler@msn.com, or 701-282-6584, or through the Conference Office.

The Schedule for November

Date	Time	Event	Location
11/1	11:00 am (ct)	ALWL #3	Fargo/First
11/1	6:00 pm (ct)	Financial Development	-----
11/2	9:30 am (ct)	CM Shares in Worship	Mayville
11/6	10:00 am-3:00 pm (ct)	Marcus Borg Lecture	CC, Fargo
11/7	3:00 pm (ct)	Financial Committee for CHYS	Bismarck
11/8	11:00 am (ct)	Financial Development	Medina
11/9	10:00 am (ct)	CM shares in worship	Parshall UCC
11/11	10:00 am (ct)	*MV Cluster	-----
11/12-13	-----	CM to Pension Board Meeting	New York
11/14	10:00 am (ct)	CHARIS	Fargo
11/14-15	6:00 pm (ct)	YC Class	-----
11/16	9:30 am (ct)	Cm to share in worship	Gackle
11/18	11:00 am (ct)	*Minot Cluster	-----
11/19	12:00 Noon (ct)	*Ft. Berthold Cluster	New Town
11/19	4:30 pm (ct)	NDHRC	-----
11/20	10:00 am (ct)	*Fargo Cluster	Plymouth
11/21-22	6:00 pm (ct)	Alternate Paths to Ordination Retreat	-----
11/24	11:00 am (ct)	*Central Cluster	-----
11/27	-----	THANKSGIVING	-----

* At the time of printing the group had not held the October meeting to confirm time.