

FEDERATED CHURCH OF GRAND FORKS

Federated Church of Grand Forks Votes to Become Open and Affirming On Sunday January 28, at its Annual Meeting, The Federated Church of Grand Forks approved a statement of inclusion and became the first "Open and Affirming" church in the Northern Plains Conference. The United Church of Christ congregation and the American Baptist congregation took separate votes, both approving the statement unanimously. [The designation in the ABC is "Welcoming and Affirming"] The statement declared "that the Federated Church of Grand Forks, North Dakota hereby affirms its commitment to become an "Open and Affirming" and a "Welcoming and Affirming" congregation. The congregation welcomes all persons of every: gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, physical ability, mental ability, sexual identity and/or sexual orientation. The congregation further pledges to publicize its policy of non- discrimination and to consider whatever new practices may be necessary to insure the full participation of all members."

War on terror: Administration report to detail Iran's meddling in Iraq 18

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2008 Election:
Obama
launched
White House bid 18

Men's basketball:
South Hawks off U.S. 10

Partly cloudy:
High 5
Low -15
Forecast: 10A

RELIGION

Come one, come all

•GF church is first N.D. UCC congregation to issue official welcome to gays, lesbians

By Stephen J. Lee
Grand Forks Herald

A Grand Forks church has taken a historic step that it hopes has profound implications for the UCC Church's role in society and the broader community. The church's new statement of welcome to gays and lesbians is the first of its kind in the Northern Plains Conference.

The congregation, which is made up of members of the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist Church and the American Baptist Church, voted unanimously on Sunday to issue the statement.

The statement, which was adopted by the church's governing body, the Board of Christian Life and Ministry, reads in part: "The congregation welcomes all persons of every gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, physical ability, mental ability, sexual identity and/or sexual orientation. The congregation further pledges to publicize its policy of non-discrimination and to consider whatever new practices may be necessary to insure the full participation of all members."

The church's statement is a landmark decision for the UCC Church in the Northern Plains Conference, which has a long history of social justice advocacy. The church's statement is a reflection of the church's commitment to the full participation of all members in the life of the church.

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From left to right: Stephen Lee, left; Rev. Dr. Tom L. Lunde, center; and Dennis Steinhilber, right. A report, submitted to the church's governing body, was approved by the congregation at its annual meeting on Sunday.

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N.D. LEGISLATURE

Faculty encounter pay woes

• Amendment to state salary plans' provisions UIC staff

By Joseph Marks

A House amendment regarding the state salary plan for the University of North Dakota faculty and staff is expected to pass in the coming weeks, but it has raised concerns among some faculty and staff members.

The amendment, which is part of a larger package of legislation, would change the way that the state calculates the salaries of its employees. The amendment would allow the state to use a different method of calculating salaries, which could result in lower pay for some employees.

The amendment is part of a larger package of legislation that is being considered by the legislature. The package includes changes to the state's budget and other areas of the state's government.

MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE

Medical pot bill doesn't just blow smoke

• More support bid to allow marijuana use by some with chronic pain

By Mike Tompkins

ST. PAUL — The House has a bill that would allow some people with chronic pain to use marijuana for medical purposes.

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