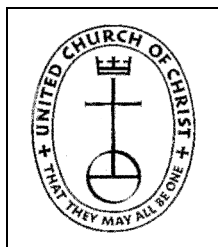


The Northern Plains Conference
United Church of Christ
1200 E Highland Acres Rd.,
Bismarck, ND 58501-1252
Telephone: 701-255-1104
<http://www.npcucc.org>



AWARE
A Monthly newsletter
supporting the building of community
in the NPCUCC
a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual,
multi-national community of faith
April 2009

As I Look At It:

The other day I heard a phrase that sent my heart racing and my head spinning. It did not have that effect because of its deep philosophical foundation or its vast technical scope but because of its basic honesty, which is beyond question. The phrase that so excited me was **“That mainline churches are losing because they keep trying to be what they remember they were instead of what God is calling them to become.”**

As we look forward to the celebration of Easter, I believe this statement gives us an opportunity to ask, “What does the Resurrection of our Redeemer mean to 21st century congregations. How can we ‘be the living community of the resurrection’ in this ever changing world?” To begin with, I have to affirm that I believe the phrase put its finger on the pulse of the problem. So often we are so intent about recapturing our past that we miss the call to live the present. We all have grand pasts, those times when God’s grace and glory shone through our lives. We were filled with the excitement of the living presence of God in our midst. It is truly a thing to celebrate, for we were focused, we were channels of God’s grace, and we were in touch with the needs and the opportunities of our world and our time.

Since that time, things have changed. We do very few things the same way that our grandparents did. In fact, it is as if someone has changed the compass points, switching the poles, and turning the whole world upside down. We think and act and generally live differently than our grandparents. We have many different options before us. While we have many of the same needs and desires we answer their call in vastly different ways. We live in a global economy. That means our tastes and expectations are different. Many of us may feel of more fragile, while others of us feel more liberated. Our tastes in music, art, life style, food, recreation, and virtually everything else has changed. We are very different people living very different lives and the church of our memories is 60 years out of touch.

So the question being asked has to be “This Easter, what is God calling us to be?” Or, put another way, “How do we live out the resurrection in 2009?” The answer to that may be in the part of the equation that has not changed. As we continue the Lenten journey and prepare to celebrate New Life, let us reaffirm with the enthusiasm of those who have gone before us that we will be God’s hands, serving those in need. We will be God’s word, proclaiming hope to those who are lost. We will be God’s community, welcoming those who are alone, forgotten and lost. We will be God’s celebration, lifting high the joy of a new day in God’s sight. The trick is that we need to do all this in ways the people of today can receive it. The church of today cannot so focus on meeting the comfort needs of those who have served in the past, that it misses the opportunity to embrace the challenges of God’s people in the here and now. This is not a judgment that the past was wrong, just that it is past. While we honor it and build upon it we simply cannot afford to be locked into reliving it. Let us be the people whom God is calling us to be today, fulfilling God’s call to discipleship in the language of this time and place

Grace and Peace, Wade

Register NOW for the Post Lenten Retreat

All NPCUCC pastors (licensed and ordained), and ALWLs are urged to plan to be at the Post Lenten Retreat April 26 – 28 at Maryvale, 11550 River Road, near Valley City. Luther Snow, author of “The Organization of Hope” and the “Power of Asset Mapping,” will be the presenter for this gathering. He will be with us beginning Sunday Evening and continuing through Tuesday morning, to guide us in a search for means and methods of revitalization and renewal within our congregations, focusing on the gifts that we have within each congregation rather than simply the problems.. On Monday, CHARIS participants will join us. The cost for lodging and meals will be \$70 per person with scholarships available. Please check the NPCUCC web site <http://www.npcucc.org/> and click on Fliers or Forms for more information. If you have questions please do not hesitate to contact the Conference Office.

Medallion Award Nomination Forms on the Web Site

The Church and Ministry Committee presents the “Medallion Award” to special lay and pastoral members each NPCUCC Annual Meeting. We invite you to visit the NPCUCC web site <http://www.npcucc.org/html/forms.php>. Click on Medallion Award for 2009 Background Information for the award’s criteria. Then click on The 2009 Medallion Award Nomination form to nominate the person of your choice. Up to three NPCUCC members may receive this prized recognition at an Annual Meeting. Help us by nominating the worthy person you know.

Nominations Are Open For NPCUCC Positions

If you or someone you know would be interested and qualified to serve on one of the standing committees of the NPCUCC (Church and Ministry, Faith and Nurture, Mission and Outreach) or the Conference Executive positions of Secretary or Treasurer) please complete the nomination form found at <http://www.npcucc.org/html/forms.php> on the NPCUCC web site. Then send it to the Conference Office.

Congregations Seeking a Pastor:

The United Church of Christ of Wahpeton is in the process of seeking pastoral leadership

There May Be Grant Money for Your Congregation's Project!

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

Plans are underway for the 2009 Annual Meeting in Minot

The theme for the 2009 Annual Meeting is "The Joy of Being Bold Disciples." We are fortunate to have several outstanding presenters, including Charlene J. Smith of the National Church. Charlene is familiar to many NPCUCC folk who met her through the various workshops she has led in the Conference. In addition to Charlene J. Smith, the Rev. Dr. David Greenhaw, president of Eden Theological Seminary of St. Louis, will be a keynote speaker and workshop leader. He has recently completed a book that focuses on the viability and ministry of rural congregations. Many of us anticipate his thoughts and comments. In addition, the Conference is honored to welcome Jim and Jayantha Wilson, missionaries through UCC Global Ministries to Botswana. They will speak at the Women's Luncheon and guide our time together as workshop leaders. The registration cost for the Annual Meeting, covering meals and program will be \$65. An informational flier is at <http://www.npcucc.org/html/fliers.php> on the NPCUCC website.

New Arrivals at the Media Center:

Several new resources are now at the Media Resource Center. I invite you to check out "**A Land Twice Promised**", Noa Baum, an Israeli, begins a heartfelt dialogue with a Palestinian woman while living in the United States. They weave together their memories and their mothers' stories creating a moving testimony illuminating the complex and contradictory history and emotions surrounding Jerusalem for Israelis and Palestinians. "**Adult Crossings**," an adult study covers the 8 major biblical stories; 1 God's Call, 2 The Exodus, 3 Sinai Covenant, 4 Promised Land, 5 Davidic Rule, 6 Jesus' Life, 7 The Cross, and 8 Resurrection Life. "**Women Speak for God**" A study of how different women in church history viewed God. 8 segments of about 30 minutes each. The NPCUCC is a member of the Media Resource Center. You can contact it by calling 605 338 8738 or via email at mrc@sodakucc.org.

What's New At Charles Hall Youth Services

To further strengthen our programming for the at-risk youth we serve, Charles Hall Youth Services has hired and promoted staff members. **Jenna Kirchmeier** was recently promoted to the newly created position of Admissions Coordinator She will be the single point contact for referral sources wanting to place youth at one of our facilities. Before stepping into this position, Jenna served as a house manager at Case Home (one of our group homes). **Kim Jondahl** was recently hired as Director of Communications & Marketing, a new part-time position with CHYS. Kim has been working in the communications field for two decades, and most recently served as editor of Bismarck Mandan "Inspire" Magazine. In partnership with Bismarck Public Schools, **Toby Seuss** has been hired to fill the part-time teacher/tutor position of CHYS. Toby is providing academic support to our foster care youth, both within the schools and with individual tutoring. These staff additions will help us expand the many programs we provide for youth, help build statewide awareness of our services, and grow in partnership with other community organizations.

Don't Forget our Mission Partner, the Protestant Church of East Timor

The NPCUCC invites congregations to focus their Lenten Offerings on our Mission Partner, the Protestant Church of East Timor. Thanks to your efforts, a school is built and children and teachers are meeting to share wisdom and most importantly hope. The work is not done. East Timor is one of the world's poorest nations; its needs are truly great. If you have not already done so, please take this opportunity to make a desperately needed contribution.

The Calendar for April

Date	Time	Event	Location
4/1	-----	West Central Regional CM Meeting	Des Moines
4/2	12:00 Noon (ct)	Progressive Clergy	Bismarck
4/5	11:00 am (ct)	CM shares in worship	Carrington
4/7	10:00 am (ct)	MV Cluster	Bismarck
4/8	-----	AWARE articles Due	-----
4/9	12:00 Noon (ct)	NDHRC/ Development	Fargo
4/9	-----	Maundy Thursday	-----
4/10	-----	Good Friday	-----
4/12	-----	Easter	-----
4/14-4/16	5:00 pm (ct)	Solo Conference Ministers	Spokane
4/16	10:00 am (ct)	Fargo Cluster	Fargo
4/17-4/18	-----	Bismarck Human Rights Conference	Bismarck
4/17	12:00 Noon (ct)	CHYS Annual Donor Luncheon	Bismarck
4/21	12:00 Noon (ct)	Ft. Berthold Cluster	New Town
4/24	11:00 am (ct)	Central Cluster	-----
4/25	11:00 am (ct)	ALWL #2	Jamestown
4/26-4/28	5:30 pm (ct)	Post Lenten Retreat	Maryvale
4/27	1:00 pm (ct)	NDCC Exec Comm.	Video Conference

4/29	11:00 a.m. (ct)	Minot Cluster	----
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