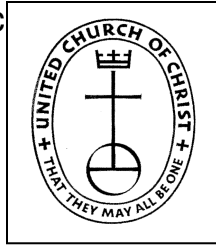


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**AWARE**  
A Monthly newsletter  
supporting the building of community  
in the  
multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual,  
multi-national community of faith  
**April 2010**

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

On March 14 in the on-line Sermon Resource SAMUEL, Kathryn Huey, Minister for Covenantal Stewardship, asks, "What is the Resurrection we are looking for this Easter?" In other words, what elements of our life are we willing to turn over to the living Christ so Renewal and Restoration can happen? This question rightfully places the call of Easter on those who should carry it. The great challenge of the empty tomb does not come to God, but to each of us. "What is the Resurrection WE are seeking this Easter?"

This comes down to two questions. The first asks, "Are we ready to be a part of the feast of new life? Are we ready to be people of the Resurrection? Are we ready to set aside those parts of our life that have kept us out of the banquet hall in the past?" This Lenten season, invited us to look closely at our lives and allow God's love to bring healing, hope and newness. It was a time of examination, confession and pardon, a time to identify what it is keeping us from taking part in the great feast. What is it that keeps us from entering the banquet hall? What anger can't we set aside? What fear blocks our path? What is it that we greedily cling to that takes the place in our life where God should reside? What do we fail to confess from our past so we do not receive the redeeming touch of God's grace? Are we ready for the empty tomb?

We should be mindful that Easter is not just a trip down memory lane. It is not just the telling of a fond old story. Easter is about God's invitation to a new day and a new life. Easter is about you, me, and the future lying before us. Easter tells us God has made everything ready--the next step is ours. It is about allowing God to do reconstructive surgery of the soul. Still the question remains "Are we ready? Will we allow God to redeem us?"

The second question comes not to each of us but to the Church of Jesus the Christ. This question asks, "are we ready to be Easter Congregations?" Jesus calls us to be communities welcoming tax collectors, sinners, the lost, the forgotten and all those generally believed to be unacceptable. This is no small thing. To use Kate Huey's phrase, "Are we ready to be a 'Prodigal Church'?" If we accept the definition of "prodigal" to mean reckless and extravagant, then are we ready to be prodigal with God's love toward those who are seeking new life and new hope? We do not fulfill the call of Easter when we set out some pretty, white flowers, and have breakfast together. Easter is about radical hospitality on steroids. It is about new beginnings. It is about being a community that can welcome those that cannot accept themselves. It is about reaching out with a healing embrace that judges not where one has been while it promises to walk together with them into God's future. Easter calls the church to be a community welcoming the stranger not because they so deserve but because the church can love that much. Easter calls the church to be a community where nothing can extinguish the light of hope.

Hence, we are back at the question with which we started, "What is the Resurrection for which we are looking this Easter?" I pray that for each of you and for each of our churches it will be something very new and very renewing. I pray that the empty tomb will be an invitation to enter the feast of new life and be embraced by the community of endless hope.

*Grace and Peace  
Wade*

### **Do You Like To Have Fun? Do You Like Adventure?**

We invite you and your friends to the fun things planned this spring and summer in our NPC and our wider UCC!!

Coming up June 11 –13 is our Conference's Annual Meeting at the Congregational United Church of Christ of Valley City. We plan a special **Family Camping Experience** for all of you who come representing your churches.

July 5 –10 at Montana State University in Billings, Montana is **Regional Youth Event**, for you to join youth and members of UCC churches from states as close as Montana and as far as Hawaii.

Later in July, will also be Summer Camp at **Wesley Acres Camp** from Sunday afternoon, July 25 to Thursday late morning, July 29. If you want to come and/or be a chaperone, please join us.

Are you interested in going as either participant or chaperone to any or all of these? Please talk to your minister to get a registration form. You can also contact one of our Conference's Co-Adjunct Youth Ministers – Rev. Carl Borden (701-840-5104) or Rev. Darcy Borden (701-840-5105) for further information.

### **Important Reminders from Lindy Holt, Disaster Ministries Coordinator**

Once again, we face precarious spring weather with river and overland flooding across the state again. It helps a lot to be ready with disaster plans for families and for your church family. Should your community have any disaster-related issues please let me know so that I can help support you. For example if your church basement floods or your community is in sandbagging mode, please let me know. I usually know the available resources and can offer support and answer questions. I can also be a sounding board for you. You can reach me by email: [lindyholt@polarcomm.com](mailto:lindyholt@polarcomm.com) or at 701-430-0727.

### **Medallion Award Nominations**

Each year at the Annual Meeting, the NPC confers Medallion Awards on lay and clergy members who stand apart for their service in the local congregation and the wider church. The Church and Ministry Committee decide who receives the Medallion Award. We invite Congregations to nominate members for this award, using the Medallion Award

Nominating Form on the NPC web site [www.npcucc.org](http://www.npcucc.org) under forms, completing and sending it to the Conference Office.

### **The Conference Nominating Committee Seeks Your Help**

The NPC Nominating Committee is at work calling NPC members to serve in the various committees and other positions of the Conference. We are currently seeking Conference Moderator, Conference Council Chair, and Members on the Church and Ministry and Mission and Outreach Committees. If you know someone who is qualified and interested (yourself included) to serve the NPC's wider ministry, please complete the nominating form on [www.npcucc.org](http://www.npcucc.org) under forms.

### **UCC launches new GISS AD campaign**

Our UCC will launch its next "God Is Still Speaking" AD April 16 using the church's best broadcasting network, its own members. We invite NPC members to receive this new ad on April 16. Its title is "Language of God" for you to Twitter, Face book and email it with abandon. This AD invites people to take a new look at God as it piques their curiosity about the UCC. When the Conference Office receives the AD at 8:00 am (ct) April 16, we will send it to all on our Email list with the sending email address [Secretary@npcucc.org](mailto:Secretary@npcucc.org). Please share it with all your members and friends.

### **NPC Spiritual Retreat**

The Conference Council has planned a Spiritual Retreat for all NPC pastors and lay leaders. April 25 – 26 at Camp of the Cross, near Garrison. Here is what we have thus far. The event will begin Sunday, April 25 with arrival at 4:00 pm (ct), dinner at 6:00 pm (ct) and evening program at 7:00 pm. Monday opens with breakfast at 8:00 am followed by morning session at 9:00, which will include reading and writing psalms, sailboat excursion, and do your own thing time. Lunch follows at noon. At 1:00, the afternoon session begins as a time for meditation, sitting, walking, sailing, games and ample DYOT. Ending worship is at 4:00 with departure at 5:00. The cost for the event is \$48 for semi private room, or \$37 for dorm style sleeping. Either includes three meals. We hope all NPC pastors and lay leaders will be able to attend.

### **WEBEX Trial Run**

The NPC has a new communication tool, WEBEX, a computer-based system of connecting pastors, lay leaders and members of the Conference. WEBEX opens up possibilities of Conference wide text studies, weekly check – ins, face-to-face committee meetings with all participants being in the comfort and safety of their home or office and much more. To participate in WebEx conversations a computer with a microphone, speakers, a camera and high-speed connection is needed. The Conference has made mission grant money available to assist congregations in purchasing the necessary equipment. If you cannot connect by computer, you can by telephone. This is not a free number but if you need to call in by phone, the Conference will help by purchasing a calling card. Two dates set for all who would like to be part of a trial run to see if the system works for them. The dates and times for the WebEx trial run are April 6 at 10:30 am (ct) and April 8 at 5:00 pm (ct). Before then NPC, pastors will be sent a connecting link and information via email. If you have any question please do not hesitate to call the Conference Office.

### **ALWL Classes are underway**

We have organized the ALWL class that will be getting underway. Dates will soon be published. If you or someone you know from the Conference is interested in participating in this important program please contact the Conference Office. ALWL nominating forms are on the NPC website, [www.npcucc.org](http://www.npcucc.org) under forms.

### **QUILT #2 IS COMING TOGETHER**

Last year thanks to a number of NPC Congregations and the Quilting group from Zion UCC of Medina, a quilt representing many of the NPC Congregations was at the Annual Meeting in Minot. This year we hope to have quilt #2 representing many more if not all of the Congregations of the Conference. If your Congregation has not submitted a quilt square, to the Conference please pick up a piece of white cloth (13' X 13") and put on it a design representing your faith and that of your Congregation. You may use any medium you choose, (picture transfer, coloring, stitching, etc.). Quilt squares and information sheets will be available through the Conference Office and at Cluster meetings.

### **The Schedule for April**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>
4/1	-----	Maundy Thursday	-----
4/2	-----	Good Friday	-----
4/3	-----	Holy Saturday	-----
4/4	-----	Easter	-----
4/6	10:30 am (ct)	WebEx Trial	-----
4/8	5:00 pm (ct)	WebEx Trial	-----
4/11	3:00 pm (ct)	Installation for Dr. Mary McNamara as president of UTS	Twin Cities
4/13	10:00 am (ct)	MV Cluster	New Salem
4/14	11:00 am (ct)	Minot Cluster	-----
4/15	10:00 am (ct)	Fargo Cluster	-----
4/16	9:00 am (et)	UCC Internet/email ad comes out	-----
4/16	11:45 am (ct)	Ho Wasta Lunch for Charles Hall	Bismarck
4/18	11:00 am (ct)	CM shares in worship	Lakota
4/19	11:00 am (ct)	Central Cluster	Gackle
4/21	12:00 pm (ct)	Ft. Berthold Cluster	New Town
4/25	9:45 am (ct)	CM shares in worship	Flasher

4/25	10:30 am (mt)	CM shares in worship	Carson
4/25-26	-----	Spiritual Retreat begins 4 pm 4/25 ends 5 pm 4/26	Camp of the Cross