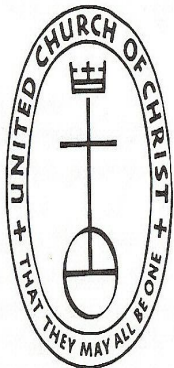


**THE NORTHERN  
PLAINS  
CONFERENCE  
UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**

**1200 EAST  
HIGHLAND ACRES  
ROAD  
BISMARCK, ND  
58501-1252  
701-255-1104  
701-255-0103, Fax  
<http://www.npcucc.org>**

**AWARE FOR:  
APRIL 2011**

**A monthly newsletter  
supporting the building  
of community in the  
multi-cultural, multi-  
ethnic, multi-lingual,  
multi-national  
community of faith.**



**A S I L O O K A T I T:**

April 24<sup>th</sup> we will gather around the empty tomb to again have our spirits lifted as we shout, "Hallelujah, Christ is Risen". The Easter message is one of those visions that never get old, because in every age, for every life it is special. No matter what your age, color, gender, place in life's journey, Easter is God's invitation assuring you that you have a place at the table.

I believe that Easter has been God's beacon of hope in every age. In the ancient days as the church struggled to define itself, Easter was the assurance to the brave souls on the frontier of faith that they were not alone. During the times when the modern nations were built, Easter proclaimed to all that God's people was not to be divided, for in God's family there were no step children. Let us remember that the stone was not rolled away so that Jesus, who later walked through closed doors, could get out, but so that the world could see in and know that a new age had dawned. During the great conflicts of our history, Easter was the assurance that beyond the times of turmoil and strife there was a new day. For each of us, it has been the promise that the God that walks with us would not allow anything, not even death, to bar us from God's loving embrace.

So what is God's message from the empty tomb for 2011? I believe that God is calling us to get beyond our fears and embrace our faith. For the God that would not be held by death would not allow the barriers of confusion, or racism, or sexism or homophobia, or ageism or any of the other "isms" which reflect our frightened cowering before that which is different, to deny one whom God loved from taking their rightful place around the family table [God's family that is]. Easter 2011 is about a hospitality that is so radical that it does not just open the doors of life; it tears then off of the hinges. It does not just welcome those from the fringe of life to come in, should they find their way to our

door step, it goes out and helps them make the journey so they can come to their place at the table. Easter 2011 is about hope that will not be put down by despair, courage that will trump threat, compassion that dwarfs anger and divine grace that touches all with the assurance that the God of the empty tomb is present.

May Easter 2011 be an hallelujah moment for you and all who gather around your table.

Namaste  
Wade



## Youth Ministry:

By Carleton Borden, Adjunct for Youth Ministry, pastor of Congregational UCC, Valley City, ND.

### Rally 2011



Spring and preparing for the joy of Easter are just around the corner, and in our Conference it is time to think of ideas that you might enjoy participating in our Northern Plains Conference, United Church of Christ. We are beginning to (believe it or not) plan for this year's Fall Youth Rally. It is to be held later this year October 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Bismarck United Church of Christ. We welcome your ideas and suggestion on this special and meaningful event.

There were discussions earlier this winter of organizing a spring time Rally in the eastern side of the Conference. Due to scheduling problems we have been unable to insure a top quality event could be put together. We apologize and we will try very hard for a Spring Rally in 2012. If you have any ideas or questions about Rally's contact Conference Program Minister Rev. Darcy Borden: 701-840-5105 / [revdarcy@yahoo.com](mailto:revdarcy@yahoo.com)

### Summer Camp 2011



#### *The 2011 New Earth*

#### *Summer Camp Experience*

With the melting snow all around us it is time to think summer camp. This year we have moved our camp program to Camp of the Cross in Garrison ND. The

sign up forms are now online at the conference website [www.npcucc.org](http://www.npcucc.org) for you to download. If you would like

hardcopies of the application sent to your church let us know. To save some paper we did not put the health forms in the applications. You will need to go to the Camp of the Cross website

<http://www.campofthecross.com/documents/healthformforweb.pdf> and print the

health form file. For more info on summer camp contact Rev. Carleton Borden: [revcarletonborden@gmail.com](mailto:revcarletonborden@gmail.com) / 701-840-5104.



***Imagine What's Possible!! Youths & Young Adults at General Synod XVIII Tampa, Florida July 1-5 2011***

*Come join the United Church of Christ as we imagine what's possible at General Synod, the biennial national gathering of the Church. We want to see YOU in Tampa, Florida!*

*Young adult opportunities will include...*

- \* Stillspeaking social opportunities \*  
Workshops \* Young adult caucuses
- \* Casual after-hour gatherings \*
- Elections for Council Youth & Young Adult Ministries

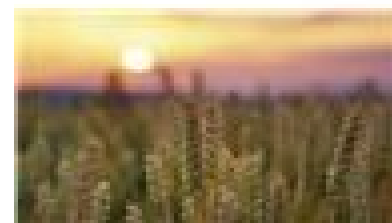
We want you there! The National UCC Council for Youth and Young Adult ministries is searching for affordable and family friendly housing options, scholarships, and more ways to help YOU get to General Synod. This and more will be going down at General Synod. See you at the HUB (the 'as-official-as-it-gets' young adult hangout)! The Northern Plains isn't organizing a contingent but Co-Adjunct Ministers Revs Carl & Darcy Borden will be in Florida during the Synod to help any Northern Plains youth who attend. Facebook: "Young Adults at General Synod" Twitter: @CYYAM

Web [www.ucc.org/synod](http://www.ucc.org/synod)  
[www.ucc.org/cyyam](http://www.ucc.org/cyyam)  
Email: [cyyamchair@gmail.com](mailto:cyyamchair@gmail.com)



**NYE 2012**

The United Church of Christ wants you to come to the National Youth Event in 2012. All youths who will be under 18 and over 13 before the summer of 2012 make plans now to go to NYE2012. Our Conference Program Minister Rev. Carleton Borden is on the visioning team for the National Youth Event. If you have any questions feel free to contact him. 701-840-5104 / rev. Experience is at Camp of the Cross for ages 8-18



**Voices From The Prairie:**

The people of Northwest North Dakota are in an awkward spot of cultural and economic evolution. Just 60 years ago oil, natural gas and coal were discovered in commercially significant amounts. Six power plants now generate electricity from the lignite coal. Mercer County which hosts a number of these plants has the highest per-capita income in North Dakota. Within the last several years, additional

discoveries of oil in the Bakken and Three Forks formation have lead to a flurry of activity similar to a gold rush. Cities in oil country are growing and “man camps” made the news as drilling rig workers tried to find a place to sleep.

Much like the discovery of gold in California in 1849 and in the Black Hills in 1874 following the Custer expedition, the rights of the people who live over these formations are pretty much ignored. Political attention is fawned on multi-national oil companies to encourage their lavish spending on every type of retail good or service.

The Three Affiliated Tribes, Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara, were granted large tracks of land in the 1851 Ft. Laramie treaty in exchange for safe passage of settlers on the Oregon trail. While much of that property was taken away by the government and given to others, the Three Tribes is still the owner of mineral rights to the Bakken formation—hundreds of millions of dollars worth.

Government policy promising healthcare to Native Americans which evolved from earlier treaties has now meandered into a system where the principle provider of healthcare is the Indian Health Service (IHS). In 2005 the IHS spent \$2,100 per Native American. The Federal Prison system in 2005 spent \$3,900 per inmate for healthcare services.

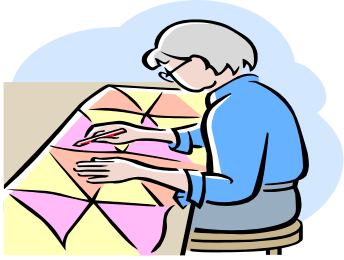
Today, the Native Americans who get healthcare from the Aberdeen Service Area of the Indian Health Service have the shortest life

expectancy of all the other Indian Tribes in the United States. The irony should not be missed. The Reservation with one of the greatest mineral resources has the shortest life expectancy of all Indian Tribes in the United States.

Like the gold rush of the past, the precious mineral is being extracted while the not so precious people suffer the inequities of a segregated healthcare system. There has been no “Brown verses the Board of Education” declaring that separate is not equal in Health Care. On an average, a Native American who is a citizen of North Dakota and the United States will live 11 years less than a White citizen of this state and country.

It is time to take a stand. As Charles Hall, the Congregational missionary, lived among the people of the Three Affiliated Tribes, he began to earn their trust. His writings to the national church and other reflected a genuine appreciation and compassion for the people he was serving. Now it is our turn, the Northern Plains Conference of the United Church of Christ has seven churches on this reservation. These are our people, our brothers and sisters, which are getting cheated out of 11 years of life by a segregated system. There are ways to end this disparity, your help is needed. Call the Wilson Health Planning Cooperative at 701-663-3886 and find out how you can join up.

Written By: Bill Patrie a member of the United Church of Christ in Bismarck, North Dakota.



## Thanks to St. John, Hebron and the Brick City Quilters NPC Quilt #2 is completed

One of the unveilings that will take place at the 2011 Annual Meeting of the Northern Plains Conference will be the second Northern Plains Conference quilt displaying the faith statements of congregations across the Northern Plains Conference. Our thanks goes out to the quilting group of St. John Church of Hebron for their dedicated effort to complete this project. The first quilt was pieced together by the quilters of Zion UCC of Medina and has been on display at the last several Annual Meetings. We continue to celebrate the dedication and talent of the congregations and members of the Northern Plains Conference.



## Summer Camp Registration:

On the [npcucc.org](http://npcucc.org) website under the Church News tab there is the registration form for the Summer Camp Experience, July 24-July 28, 2011. The location of the Camp Experience is at Camp of the Cross for ages 8-18.



## AWARE Available in TWO Versions:

Starting with the December 2010 issue, the Northern Plains Conference AWARE will come in two versions. Please let the Conference Office know how this works for you. There will be one that as before, will be held to two pages, and may have a smaller print size to accommodate that limitation. This is especially helpful to Congregations that mail it out via the US mail. Then, there will be a second version of the AWARE which will be an expanded version and sporting a larger font. This version will serve Congregations that send out the AWARE via email.

## News From Cue Seminaries:

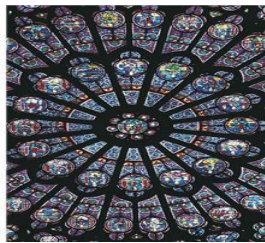
Chicago Theological Seminary is excited to offer a Master of Arts in Religious Leadership degree program beginning Fall of 2011. The two-year degree is designed to prepare women and men for service in a range of religious, faith-based, community and advocacy settings with concentrations in: Interfaith Engagement, Social Transformation, Spirituality and Pastoral Care, and Word and Worship.

We encourage all those interested in pursuing lay ministry or strengthening the theological dimensions of their work to learn more: [www.ctschicago.edu/marl](http://www.ctschicago.edu/marl).



## Northern Plains Conference Pastor highlighted in Worship Ways

Marilyn Levine pastor at New Town UCC and Memorial Congregational in Parshall has contributed Lenten worship materials that have been shared through Worship Ways (which can be found on the National UCC Web Site [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org) put Worship Ways in the search area and then follow the prompts). That service was the basis for the Ash Wednesday Worship at the Amistad Chapel at the church House in Cleveland. Pictures from the service can be found on the NPC Website [www.npcucc.org](http://www.npcucc.org) on the homepage and under the Church News tab. **Well done Marilyn.**



## Congregations Seeking A Pastor:

The following churches are seeking new pastoral leadership:

**New Horizon Parish** (near Lakota),  
**Plymouth Congregational United  
Church of Christ in Fargo** (currently  
with a hold on profiles), and **United  
Church of Christ in Bismarck.**



## Lenten Retreat: The Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:

The Northern Plains Conference Welcomes Jennifer Kottler from Sojourners Magazine in Washington, D.C. to the Lenten Retreat, April 3-5, 2011. The Northern Plains Conference Lenten Retreat which will be held at the Congregational United Church of Christ in Jamestown. The theme for the Retreat will be "The Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century". In a time of radical change which calls forth new gifts, and blesses with new challenges, the church is called to walk into the promised land of a new tomorrow. Jennifer Kottler, an ordained Disciples of Christ pastor, and member of the Sojourners editorial staff, will guide us in discussion of the future as we see it and how we need to prepare for it

Please check the Northern Plains Conference Web Site under Church News or put Lenten Retreat in the search box and read more about our Lenten Retreat speaker.

Housing arrangements have been made at the Quality Inn and Suites in Jamestown and you can register for a

room by calling 701-252-3611 or email your request for a room to [GM:ND034@choicehotels.com](mailto:GM:ND034@choicehotels.com)., request the Northern Plains Conference block of rooms.

You can also find registration forms on the Northern Plains Conference Web Site under Church News or by entering Lenten Retreat in the search box. To help offset the cost of several meals, there will be a \$25.00 charge, payable to the Northern Plains Conference. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Conference Office.

### **Northern Plains Conference Rural Resolution Continues To Call UCC:**

In 2007 at the General Synod in Hartford, Connecticut the Northern Plains Conference presented a resolution which called on the National Church to commit greater resources of time and money to the well being of the rural church. Since that time this call has continued to spark energy and conversation in a variety of areas of the National UCC. Varieties of projects have been started. Some lead to future projects, and some due to staff changes had to be dropped to be picked up at a later time. This past week, a workshop was held in Dubuque, Iowa in which the participation of the UCC was a direct outgrowth of our resolution. Charlene J. Smith was the National representative who called together the UCC caucus. The workshop was entitled "Hospitality in Changing Times" and featured Tex Sample as a keynote speaker and workshop leader. A meeting of UCC pastors and Conference staff present lead to a commitment to develop

regional Rural workshops for UCC pastors and lay leaders in the various regions. I was pleased to represent our Conference at this gathering and to now say that while this has been a long time in coming it does seem to have some direction and momentum. One of our primary concerns was to make possible gatherings that would be helpful, to local congregations and accessible to local congregations. The conversation in the UCC caucus came to the conclusion that future rural ministry workshops would have to be in driving distance for pastors and conference leadership if we were going to expect them to attend. While our little resolution has not surfaced for many years it continues to be a link that calls the wider church to new life.



### **What does the Conference Disaster Ministries Coordinator do?**

Often we are only aware of having a Disaster Ministries Coordinator when we are in the midst of a disaster like a flood, tornado, chemical spill or other catastrophe so I would like to share a little bit about the on-going work of the job. Much of the focus of what I do is to represent the United Church of Christ and the Northern Plain Conference ecumenically with denominational, non-profit groups, state

and FEMA (Federal Emergency Managers Agency) in networking in preparation, response and recovery before, during and following disasters. The special focus of the UCC National Church has been on technological based disasters.

You may remember that in 2009 we contributed \$25,000 from the Northern Plains Conference for long term recovery and to help bring Rev. Byran Crousore, Disaster Specialist, from Church World Services here to do workshops on the emotional after effects of disaster for ministers and other professionals, to meet with unmet needs committees and to preach in 2 of our churches.

Here in our state we have an organization called VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster) that meets year round to plan, to work cooperatively, and to respond when needed. Together we discern what resources we can bring to the table for the better good of communities affected. For example at the present time we are trying to work with the people living in the Devils Lake Basin area that has been and will continue to be affected by the rising waters. We are helping with funds from the National church to sponsor some much needed meetings around issues of the emotional effects of being in disaster mode for so many years.

We are preparing too for potential spring flooding and recently an email was sent out asking churches and congregations to consider taking a special offering to help with our part of recovery to help unmet needs, committees, and North Dakota Long

Term Recovery. We hope that everyone contributes so that we can help with unmet needs of those who are affected with compassion and financial support.

I am here to serve the churches and people of the Conference in any way that I can. You can contact me at 701-430-0727 or at [ethelindholt@gmail.com](mailto:ethelindholt@gmail.com).

Blessings,

Lindy Holt, Disaster Ministries Coordinator



### **Medallion Award**

Each year at the Annual Meeting we recognize Northern Plains Conference members who distinguish themselves in service by presenting them with a Medallion Award. The Medallion Award is to honor deserving lay persons and ministers who have served in the Conference in some capacity. The Award is intended to recognize members of the Conference who have served voluntarily for a sustained duration in one or more of these areas: and local church, Regional and/or National Synod instrumentalities and Local Church, Local Church and Community.

Medallion Award Nomination forms and background information can be found on the Northern Plains Conference Web Site, [www.npcucc.org](http://www.npcucc.org) and typing "medallion award" into the search box. If you have difficulty or need a nomination form sent to you, please contact the Conference Office.

All Medallion Award Nomination forms are to be sent to the Conference Office



## One Great Hour of Sharing Materials to Arrive at Congregations Soon

On April 3<sup>rd</sup> we will be receiving the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering. This special offering provides each member and congregation an opportunity to embrace the wider ministry of the United Church of Christ as the life giving message of God's care and love is shared by word and deed. If you do not receive the materials in the very near future, please contact the Conference Office for assistance.

## Northern Plains Conference and South Dakota Conference Enter Into Meaningful Conversation About A Shared Future

During the past several years the Northern Plains Conference and neighboring Conferences have been in meaningful discussion around the subject of how we could more effectively be engaged in ministry. Technology, finances staffing have all been discussed. Recently conversations between the Northern Plains Conference and the South Dakota Conference have become more serious. Both Conferences are looking seriously at the possibility of working together

more closely in the future. At a recent meeting of the Northern Plains Conference Council there was a vote to name official delegates that they might continue the discussion. This same process is underway in South Dakota. This discussion continues to develop and at times seems to take on a life of its own. Please watch the E Messenger and AWARE for more updates.



United Church of Christ  
**CORNERSTONE**  
FUND

## Making Friends with Church Numbers

Our sister Congregation, First Congregational UCC in Moorhead, MN is hosting a workshop entitled "Making Friends of Church Numbers on Sunday, April 10<sup>th</sup> from 1 – 6 pm (ct). This workshop and lunch will be provided by the Cornerstone Foundation, a financial ministry of the United Church of Christ. The workshop will provide the opportunity to learn more about; basic financial statements, developing a narrative budget, and the policies and procedures every church needs. To register for this workshop, call 218 236 1756 or contact the Northern Plains Conference Office



## Nominations Are Received for Northern Plains Conference Offices:

As we prepare for the upcoming Annual Meeting, June 3-5, 2011 in Fargo at First Congregational United Church of Christ, we invite Northern

Plains Conference members and congregations to prayerfully consider serving in a Conference Office. At the Present time, the Northern Plains Conference Nominating Committee will be looking to fill the position of Conference Secretary, Conference Treasurer, Church and Ministry Committee (2 positions), Faith and Nurture Committee (3 positions), and Mission and Outreach Committee (3 positions). Many of these positions can

be filled with those that are already serving should they wish to serve another term. You can find a “2011 Nomination Form” by going to the Northern Plains Conference Web Site and looking under “Resource” or by putting “2011 Nomination” in the Search area.

### The April Calendar

Date	Time	Event	Location
4/3	11:30 am (ct)	CM guides strategic planning	Jamestown
4/3	5:30 pm (ct)	Lenten Retreat	Jamestown
4/4	9:00 am (ct)	Lenten Retreat	Jamestown
4/5	9:00 am (ct)	Lenten Retreat	Jamestown
4/7	10:00 am (ct)	MV Cluster	-----
4/9	10:00 am	ALWL #4	-----
4/10	1:00 -6:00 p.m.(ct)	Making Friends of Church Members	Cong. UCC, Moorhead, MN
4/11	12:00 (ct)	West Central Regional	Northland Inn, MN
4/12	-----	West Central	Northland Inn, MN
4/13	-----	West Central	Northland Inn, MN
4/14	12:00 Noon (ct)	Ft. Berthold Cluster	New Town
4/20 – 24	-----	CM on Vacation	-----
4/21	-----	Maundy Thursday	-----

4/21	10:00 am (ct)	Fargo Cluster	-----
4/22	-----	Good Friday	-----
4/24	-----	Easter	-----
4/25	11:00 am (ct)	Central Cluster	_____
4/28	11:00 a, (ct)	Minot Cluster	_____