

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  
**August 2010**

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

**“The Song of God”**

One night, many years ago when our family was vacationing in the Bad Lands of South Dakota we decided to do something that has had an impact on all of us ever since. Well after dark, when the traffic was all gone and all the noise of people was stilled, we went out into the Bad Lands, drove several miles down a back road, stopped the car, turned off everything (watches that beep, there were no cell phones, CB radio, everything). We got on the top of the car and just sat there, SILENTLY. After a period of waiting, we made two very interesting discoveries. First: what seemed lifeless was really teeming with life. After a while, we discovered that there was life all around us. Moving walking, crawling, slithering life was all about us. In this seemingly desolate area, we were certainly not alone. While this was a monumental discovery, our second discovery was even more stupendous. When our world and we became completely silent (which took some doing) we heard the “Hum of the Earth” [It is about E below middle C]. The Earth is not silent; there is a pervasive sound that comes from within. This confirmed for us that we were really the guests, possibly even the uninvited guests, in a very exclusive setting.

Our Son, Brice, had a guest by the name of Jeremy, with him on this trip (This was so that Brice would not be left to spend a whole week on his own with his OLD parents). I am guessing that this was the first time that Jeremy had ever been quiet for more than a second or two in his entire life. Suddenly it dawned on Jeremy that he was hearing the hum, his jaw dropped, his eyes got huge and he froze in place. Later he crawled over to where Peg and I were and asked, “Is that God Singing?” Reflecting on his words and his wonder, I am reminded of Isaac Watts’ hymn “O God Our Help In Ages Past” [#25 in the NCH] verse 3 that reads, “Before the Hills in Order Stood or Earth Received Its Frame, From Everlasting You Are God, To Endless ears the Same.” I know scientists could give a clear answer as to the origin of the Hum of the Earth. But as my faith would assure me that God is in all things, it would also assume that the “Hum of the Earth” is the “Song of God.”

The hum is the assurance that no matter how desolate, forlorn or frustrating our life journey might become we are never left alone. We are always in the loving company of God’s redeeming presence. While God often will call us to new ventures and new worlds, God will never ask us to step out on our own alone. We are always in the divine presence of the One that called all life into being. Life is not a solo journey but a partnership with the creator who continues to create through us.

As people of faith, we are called to live that partnership. To step forth knowing that God is stepping with us. Our words and actions may well be a part of the Song of God. What we do and what we say is supported by the God that is the source of life. So if it seems that God is calling us beyond our limit, we need to remember that it is not beyond the limit of God. While we may be entering a land or a world that is strange to us, it is home to God. The wonder of this for me is that as we are surrounded by the Hum of the Earth, so our words and actions are really part of God’s sacred symphony of hope and promise. May we live our part with the enthusiasm of one that is celebrating the dawn of God’s new creation.

*Namaste  
Wade*

**Congregations seeking a pastor:** Mayville; Fargo, Plymouth.

**In Case of Disaster**

Lindy Holt, the NPC Disaster Coordinator is currently on Sabbatical and will not be available to respond. In the event of a need to contact the Conference Disaster Coordinator, please call the Conference Office (701-255-1105) and ask for Wade. We are in touch with our VOAD partners and look forward to serving you. It is our prayer that Lindy will have a spiritually enriching experience as she engages in reflection, fellowship and meditation.

**CHURCH WORLD SERVICE IN NEED OF KITS**

Due to the many disasters that are taking place within this country and round the world and to the time of the year Church World service is in need of various kits. There is a special need for the School Kit, Hygiene Kit, Baby Care Kit and the Emergency Clean-Up Kit. Collecting and assembling these kits is an excellent project for the various groups within a congregation (Sunday School, Youth, Women, Men, couples or Sunday Worship). You will find the list of items for each of these kits as well as instructions on how to pack and ship the kits on the NPC Web site under the “Church News” Heading. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call the Conference Office.

**FIVE FROM NPC ATTEND JUSTICE TRAINING EVENT IN BILLINGS**

The Justice and Witness Ministries of the National Church setting is sponsoring training events around the country. One of them is in Billings, MT July 29 – Aug. 1<sup>st</sup>. The purpose of the event is to provide training to those who would like to participate in moving our world towards the vision of a more just, peaceful and compassionate community that honors all of God’s creation. There will be five participants from the Northern Plains Conference participating in this event, they are; Ken Adams, Carleton Borden, Dorothy (Darcy) Borden, Peg Schemmel and Wade Schemmel.

## REMEMBERING A GERMAN CONGREGATIONAL PIONEER

The Rev. Nelda Gertrude (Bader) Lockwood, the first woman to be ordained as a minister by German Congregational Churches recently died June 6<sup>th</sup> in Nebraska City, Nebraska.

Nelda Gertrude Lockwood was born September 22, 1926 in New Leipzig, North Dakota, the daughter of Jacob and Lydia Bader. She married Dwight Lockwood, August 1, 1957 in Golden Valley, N. D.

She and her brother Ted were ordained together in the First German Congregational Church (now known as the Pilgrim UCC.) on Sept. 2, 1951 in Billings, Montana.

Rev. Lockwood served the Zion United Church of Christ, Medina, from October 1953 to June 1, 1954, when it was still the Zion (German) Congregational Church. She served as interim pastor while the congregation waited for her brother, Rev. Theodore Bader to complete his schooling. In addition she served Hope Congregational Church of Golden Valley, ND, Peace Congregational Church of Zap, St. John's Congregational Church of Wishek (a predecessor of the Wishek UCC), Zion United Church of Christ of Falls City, NB, and St. John's United church of Christ in Talmadge, NB.

In 1989, she moved to Nebraska City, where she was a member of the Bethel United Church of Christ.

Rev. Lockwood fondly remembered her service at Zion. Writing for Zion UCC's centennial book, she recalled, "It was in this church that I had my first infant baptism, conducted my first funeral, and performed my first marriage service." She added, "I had an opportunity learn a lot about the ministry in this German church."

She did more than learn, because she also led the planning and preparations for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Medina church, including the anniversary book. She also helped the women of the church prepare new programs.

She was reluctant to make much ado about her achievement as the first woman to be ordained and serve as pastor at a German Congregational Church. Her brother Ted recalls that she paid the price of other women pioneers and over the years received much less pay and recognition than her male counterparts in ministry. Yet, "you would not have found a more dedicated and devoted pastor anywhere," Ted said. She did not with some pride that she was the only woman "to prepare, preach and conduct worship services in the German language."

### ***"The lion may eat my body but it can't swallow my soul" – Slinky!***

The final tally of youth and adults from all over the Western USA and Hawaii gathered in Billings, MT was close to two hundred and fifty. Thirteen of those youth and adults ventured from the Northern Plains. I want to tell you from their own words what our Northern Plains participants said about their experience at 2010 W-RYE. ~ Rev. Carl

*"I had fun canoeing." Emily – Bismarck*

*"Western RYE inspired me to Reach Beyond the Big Sky." Jared – Wahpeton*

*"I really enjoyed seeing so many new faces..." Adler – Bismarck*

*"The trip was fun. I really liked hanging out with the Hawaiians..." James – Parshall*

*"I enjoyed ... the diversity of the speakers we had." Brianna – Bismarck*

*"It was awesome how no matter who came to the dance everyone danced together in one big group..." Brooke – Fargo*

*"...The Improv class was very funny" Austin – Bismarck*

*"I loved all the participation in the workshops, worship and family groups" Allie – Wahpeton*

*"Got to meet great adults and youth...found some ways to inspire/educate" Katie – Bismarck*

*"...liked the noisiness of worship & plenary..." Marilyn – New Town*

*"the mission trip (was) eye opening" Dawn – Bismarck*

## SHAPING PRAIRIE HOSPITALITY

Charlene J. Smith of the National Church setting will be with us in person and via WebEx to lead a series entitled "Shaping Prairie Hospitality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." The event will begin with a face-to-face workshop at the Jamestown United Church of Christ September 10 – 11. This will start with a dinner meeting September 10 beginning at 6:00 pm (ct) with registration at 5:30 pm (ct). Pastors and lay leaders from participating congregations are invited to attend. (Please fill out the registration form and give us the number attending so that we can make proper preparations.) The meeting will continue Saturday, September 11<sup>th</sup> ending at 3:00 pm (ct). Following this there will be a series of WebEx meetings on the following dates; 10/29/10, 11/16/10, 2/10/11, 3/10/11, 4/14/11 all at 6:00 pm (ct) Charlene is planning to join us for a face-to-face meeting May 20 – 21. That gathering's place has not yet been set. The entire event concludes with a celebration liturgy shared by all participating churches on Pentecost June 12, 2011. Please check the NPCUCC website [www.npcucc.org](http://www.npcucc.org) under "Church News Heading" under the picture, registration forms are at the "Registration Heading."

## DATE OF DOROTHY BORDEN'S INSTALLATION MOVED

Dorothy Borden's installation as the pastor of the Congregational United Church of Christ of Argusville has been moved to September 12<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 pm (ct). Please note this date change on your calendars.

## THE CALENDAR FOR AUGUST

Date	Time	Event	Location
8/1	-----	Justice Training	Billings
8/2-3	-----	CM on vacation	-----
8/5	10:00 am (ct) – 4:00 pm (ct)	Fargo Cluster Outing	Don McCullagh's camper at Lazy Acres
8/6	11:00 am (ct)	Central Cluster Gathering	City Park, located at 4 <sup>th</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> SW in Valley City. In case of rain relocate to UCC
8/7	10:30 am (ct)	Multiple Paths	Bismarck UCC
8/11-8/19	-----	CM on Vacation Office Closed	-----
8/22	7:00 pm (ct)	Fred Kirschenmann "Faith and Sustainability"	Zion UCC at Medina