

**NORTHERN PLAINS CONFERENCE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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



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**AWARE
2011**



As I Look At It

Imagine What's Possible, was the theme for General Synod 28 that called us to a vision of the future. We were called to commit to that Divinely empowered future as Congregations, Conferences and as the National Church. We are called to see in the future the modern "Promised Land" in which God's Spirit would be actively guiding and sustaining us. This was a call to recognize that the future is a time not just to survive, but to excel in mission. This is a time for us to dream of a future filled with a potential of partnership with God in the continued creation of God's community. We are not done. God is not finished. Creation is not completed. There is still much of God's vision, for all of us; that need to be fulfilled.

As I reflect on our time at General Synod in Tampa, I want to thank Karen Hartman, Patrick Hope and Dorothy (Darcy) Borden, each for being part of the delegation representing the Northern Plains Conference. Together they brought a depth of understanding that was linked to a wealth of commitment. We were also supported by Darla Schafer who was a representative to Global Ministries, and Peg Schemmel who was a representative to Local Church Ministries and Jim Moos who was a representative to the Executive Council. All have completed their terms of office this year. While the combined NPC presence did not make us a large delegation their composition made us an effective one.

As we gathered to envision the possibilities that in God's name lay before us we also took time to celebrate special recognitions being received by NPC members. We saw Jim Moos elected and installed as the executive for Global Ministries, Juanita Helphrey receive the Social Prophet award from Justice and Witness

Ministries and Beth Begg received the "Honored Lay Woman" award. We were guided as Karen Hartman read the scripture during closing worship. We also recognize that during GS 28 Evan Mandigo was elected to the office of General Ministries Board, Darlene Perkins was elected to the Justice and Witness Ministries Board, Tammy Toepke Floyd was elected to the Local Church Ministries Board and Stephen Holmes was elected to the Global Ministries Board. We are blessed to have such strong representation at the National Church. We in the Northern Plains Conference are called to support our brothers and sisters from the Conference as they help to guide the ministry of our wider church.

In addition, Jim Moss being elected to the Collegium as the Executive for Global Ministries, we also elected Mark Clark as the Associate General Minister and J. Bennett Guess as Executive for Local Church Ministries. We wish each of them God's richest spirit as they assume their duties in the coming weeks. In an additional article we will be listing the various actions of delegates to GS 28.

The general theme of GS 28 reminded us that God is calling and empowering us to be about the ministry of touching, renewing and empowering lives. We are in a ministry that is called to heal communities, nations and the people that are in them. We were called not to be fearful but faithful. Let us, therefore, go forth imagining what is possible when we live and move in partnership with the "Still Speaking God.

Namaste
Wade





Don't Forget to Mug Your Guests and Visitors.

At the last Annual Meeting in Fargo guests and delegates were invited to take home mugs imprinted with the UCC logo and the "Northern Plains Conference" imprint. The purpose was to give the mugs to visitors so that they would have something to help them remember this time with you. The mugs could be filled with literature and possibly some candy or cookies from your church. This would hopefully work as an invitation calling the visitors to come again and visit your community of faith. You may wish to develop some pieces that could be fit into the mugs that would have helpful information about worship and activity times. A number of the mugs were given out at the Annual Meeting following the banquet on Saturday evening. The mugs are available through the Conference Office. Please contact us that we can make arrangements to get additional ones to you. Do not forget to "Mug your Guests".



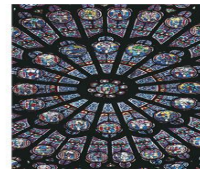
We have just received new addresses for Lester Soberg, they are;

Blessing House
13090 SW Laurmount Drive
Tigard, OR, 97223
Or
Ron Soberg
C/O Lester Soberg
11333 SW Gaade Street
Tigard, OR, 97223



AWARE Available in TWO Versions:

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 version 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 and photos. This version will serve Congregations that send out the AWARE via email. Please inform the Conference Office at 701-255-1104, which version works for your Congregation most efficiently.



Congregations Seeking A Pastor:

The following churches are seeking new pastoral leadership:

- Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ in Fargo** (currently with a hold on profiles), and
- United Church of Christ in Bismarck**



State Women's Retreat at the Abby in Richardton, September 16 – 18
Charlene J. Smith of the National Church will join the NPC and South Dakota women for their annual retreat which will be held this year at the Abby in Richardton. The theme for the

weekend gathering will be “Communing With God”. On Friday evening the focus will be “Letting Go and Welcoming God”, On Saturday Morning “Communing with God through our gifts”, On Saturday afternoon the focus will be “Communing with God through nature”. On Saturday evening the focus will be “Reflection of the day with God” and On Sunday morning the closing focus will be “Communing with God and sending forth with a communion service”. All the women of our Conference are invited to come and make this special time of reflection, fellowship and service one to remember. The mission project for the gathering will be collecting food for the food shelf in Parshall. A listing of items needed can be found on the NPC Web Site www.npcucc.org by July 22, under “Church News” along with the flier and a registration form. If you have questions please do not hesitate to call the Conference Office.



It is with special gratitude that we in the NPC receive the second mile gifts from Flasher UCC and Emmaus UCC of Carson. These gifts that were above and beyond the regular OCWM gifts were raised by hosting a car wash for the purpose of receiving special funds for the support of the Northern Plains Conference. As it is with gratitude that we receive all gifts, we lift up these special second mile gifts and dedicate ourselves to using them and all the support with which we are blessed wisely and faithfully.



National Youth Event 2012
Purdue University
July 2012

It is time to begin to think about us in the Northern Plains organizing the Conference contingent to the 2012 National Youth Event to be at Purdue University in West Lafayette Indiana. We are looking for adults who wish to be the contingent leaders for this great event. NYE-2012 will be one of those great moments in the lives of our High School aged Northern Plains youth. Help us help them to have a great time. Rev. Carleton & Rev. Dorothy Borden have already begun to build the plan for the trip but they will not be able to lead our great and exciting group to West Lafayette. This is where we need you and the adults in your church.

If you are interested in being that contingent leader or being an adult chaperone please either contact: the Northern Plains conference office or the Borden's' @ revcarletonborden@gmail.com



Sacred Conversation on Race.

We are invited to join our brothers and sisters from the South Dakota Conference as they gather at their camp (Placerville) in the Black Hills to share in a **Sacred Conversation on Race**. The informative and meaningful gathering will take place September 12 – 14. Norm Jackson, whom many of you know, will be the facilitator. The Sacred Conversation will provide a time for all participants to share their ideas, fears and hopes as we continue to seek ways to move forward to more effective

relations with one another. This gathering will provide an opportunity to explore the realities we all share and the feelings that we personally hold. Please watch the NPC Web Site www.npcucc.org and the "E Messenger for more information.



Media Resource Center

Summer is a great time for playing.....and planning!

Have you decided on your Fall Bible Study? What about Adult Forum? *Modern Parables* is currently our most popular resource. It's a group study DVD set with 6 – 12 complete stand alone lessons on six different parables.

Have you thought about special programming for the children on the low attendance Sundays (like the opening of Pheasant season and the Sunday following Thanksgiving)? Maybe popcorn and a new movie would work! We have some new DVDs arriving soon from Rabbit Ears Publishing. They include: *Moses in Egypt, Noah & The Ark, Parables that Jesus Told, and The Lion & The Lamb.*

Please check the website to view lots of possibilities!

Carmen Gill, Administrator
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Voices from the Prairie:

The 28th General Synod proved to be just as interesting as the 27th General Synod. Attending the Plenary and Committee Hearings can either be quite thought provoking or quite mundane. A couple of topics covered included a vote to reduce the number of people who serve on the National Boards and Committees from over 300 to 50 and a vote to have the General Synod every 3/4 years instead of every other year, among many others. New this year was a voting key pad, no more waving colored cards. Nevertheless as Wade said in the previous AWARE, there were also many other high points. Meeting with the Moos' as they begin their new journey was an important one. We also had an opportunity to meet and eat with the Delegation from South Dakota. I attended a presentation by Richard Twiss, an author from South Dakota, who is on a journey to see where Christianity and Native American beliefs cross paths. The Exhibit Area is always a highlight. Every evening there was a worship service and I was asked to read the scripture for the last worship service on Tuesday night. That was an honor. It was enlightening and rewarding to meet and converse with the others in our delegation, Darcy Borden, Patrick Hope and Wade. Lastly, what was really special about the trip was being able to witness my sister, Juanita Helphrey, receive the Social Justice Prophet Award bestowed on her by her peers from the Justice and Witness Ministries. Thank you Wade for the experience of being a delegate to 2 General Synods. It was an opportunity I'm glad I didn't pass up.

Written by Karen Hartman, New Town, North Dakota.

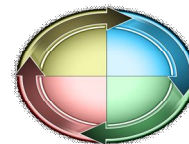
**A Report of the United Church of Christ
General Synod 28 Tampa, Florida – July 1st
through July 5th 2011 by Reverend Darcy
Borden**

It was a great honor for those of us in the delegation representing our Northern Plains Conference at the recent General Synod 28 held in Tampa, Florida. Rev. Dr. Wade Schemmel, Karen Hartman, Patrick Hope and I were among the delegation attending this Synod. We were not the only members of the Northern Plains who had connection with or involvement in the Synod work, we had others like Peg Schemmel, Darla Schaeffer and James Moos representing through their work with their various Boards of our national church. Beth Begg was honored for her lifetime work in Women's Fellowship as our Honored Lay Women from the Conference. Juanita Helphrey was an important presence at the CAIM booth and at the dinner that honored her work in ministry and the book she wrote and published dealing with the congregations and ministry of Ft. Berthold. Also our Rev. Carl Borden was tasked with doing a presentation on the 2012 National Youth Event that is available for any church who would like it.

General Synod 28 were full of moving, discerning and spirit filled moments as our wider church body invited discussion and vote on matters pertaining to our work in the world in the name of our faith, and how it can be lived out in each of our individual yet connected church bodies within our Conference. From discussing the pros and cons of issues such as United Governance, Affirming Health Care Coverage for Clergy Families, to supporting the Democratic Republic of the Congo and supporting Puerto Rican prisoners as well as calling on all local United Church of Christ congregations to come up with a Youth Ministries Covenant, these and other issues were discussed and voted upon. Through these

resolutions and the others that were talked about in plenary sessions and committee meetings and some in informational forums, our wider church was seen within each part adding to the whole, coming to live out its meaning as the United Church of Christ. In witnessing these discussions and sitting in on one of the committee meetings on one of these issues, I see how our church is not just one voice rising above all, but each voice given the chance to be recognized is showing how each of our churches care about these issues each in their own distinct way.

Like I said, it was a great honor for all of us to attend who were delegates, connecting and reconnecting with old friends and colleagues, making new friends and strengthening the bonds we have had or just beginning, as in our Conference enjoying fellowship time with our sister conference; the South Dakota Conference. As for myself as a delegate, it is an experience I will never forget for the spirit that walked with me and hopefully all who attended, and will inspire me to live out and share with all what our church means now and in the future. Check out the many YouTube videos that were made during the Synod to see all the fun that occurred during this biannual event.



Northern Plains Conference Fall Youth Rally

October 20 - 22, 2011

Location: Bismarck United Church of Christ

Address: 1200 East Highland Acres Road

Time: Thursday @ 1 pm - Saturday @ Noon

Cost: \$50 /Save \$5 If Registration Postmarked by October 8th

Registrations Due: October 14th

Bring: Sleeping Bag, Pillow & Personal Care Items

Clothing (appropriate for sports & service project) Swim Suit

Work Gloves & Rake

Money for Snacks (while traveling)

Talent Show Items (instruments, etc.)

Adult Chaperone / Advisor

Make Checks Payable to: NPCUCC

Mail Registrations to:

Bismarck United Church of Christ

Att: Dawn Archer

1200 East Highland Acres Road

Bismarck, ND 58501



Generosity as Spiritual Practice; Changing Lives, Transforming Churches,

is the title and theme for the workshop that Kate Huey of the National Church will be presenting in Bismarck, September 30 and October 1st. This workshop will be an opportunity for congregations to explore both the faith perspective and the practice of generosity. Special topics for the gatherings will be Year-round stewardship, Giving as Spiritual Practice, Motivational resources, Financial Wellness, Generational Questions, and The Stewardship of Creation. Through Bible Study, conversation, sharing, worship and presentation Rev. Huey will guide us along a path of deeper understanding of the challenges and possibilities for meaningful and effective stewardship in our congregations. Please watch the NPCUCC web site www.npcucc.org for an informational flier and registration information, including suggested motel accommodations.



Nov. 1-11, 2011... ONE UNITED CHURCH on a shared mission for 11 powerful days to feed the hungry and confront food-related injustice. This is MISSION: 1

In 11 days, the United Church of Christ will collect more than 1 MILLION ITEMS OF HEALTHY FOOD and other household items for local food banks and outreach services

In 11 days, the United Church of Christ will make an extra-special push to gather online contributions of more than \$111,111 DOLLARS for [Neighbors in Need](#), offerings that will be shared for hunger-action purposes with agencies of justice and compassion throughout the United States.

In 11 days, the United Church of Christ will offer more than 11,111 LETTERS to Congress asking our government to reform U.S. foreign assistance in a way that more effectively benefits hungry and poor people worldwide, helping to provide a major final push to Bread for the World's 2011 "[Offering of Letters](#)" campaign.

DURING THE FIRST 11 DAYS of NOVEMBER, an online tote board at ucc.org will tally our collective count of foodstuffs, donations and letters - information we'll update and celebrate in real time together.

And throughout the 11 days, the UCC's [Justice and Witness Ministries](#) will organize church-member delegations to meet with Members of Congress to bring attention to our church's concern about hunger at home and abroad.

Most importantly, our UCC motto and Jesus' prayer "that they may all be 1" will become a focused, concerted mission emphasis across the whole United Church of Christ to educate ourselves and one another about food-related policy issues through sermons, seminars and conversations; to advocate on behalf of hungry people at home and around the world; to raise money for hunger-action purposes; and to share bread - and tuna, and peanut butter, and vegetables, and cereal - with our neighbors in need.

Begin now to organize your church's victory strategy. And plan now to join in a national celebration of our campaign's success on Sunday, Nov. 13 - in your local UCC church.

The world needs the distinct values, vision and voice of the United Church of Christ - Continuing Testament. Extravagant Welcome. Changing Lives. This is MISSION:

1

The Calendar for August

Date	Time	Event	Location
8/2	3:00 (ct)	Conference Call	Geoffrey Black
8/4	11:00 am (ct)	Minot Cluster Summer Picnic	Garrison
8/7	9:00 am (ct) 11:00 am (ct)	Cm joins in worship	Granville Minot
8/14	10:00 am (ct)	CM joins in worship	New Town
8/16	4:30 pm (ct)	NPC/SDC meeting	Aberdeen
8/17	9:00 am (ct)	NPC/SDC meeting	Aberdeen
8/21	---	Installation Service	Lakota
8/28	-----	CM on Vacation	-----
8/29	-----	CM on Vacation	-----
8/30	-----	CM on Vacation	-----
8/31	-----	CM on Vacation	-----